

Thursday December 21 1995

Abu Dhabi D 8.50	Algeria L 2.20	Andorra FF 10	Austria S 2.20	Bahrain BD 0.80	Belgium BF 50	Bulgaria L 1.70	Croatia KN 15.50	Cyprus C 0.50	Czech Republic KC 45	Denmark DK 14	Dubai D 0.50	Egypt E 2.5	Finland FM 11	France FF 10	Germany DM 3.50	Greece D 50	Hong Kong HK 25	Hungary F 100	Iceland IK 185	India Rs 10	Israel IS 6.90	Japan Y 110	Kuwait KD 0.50	Latvia US 2	Lithuania LS 2	Malaysia MY 2.50	Malta ML 0.43	Mexico D 15	Netherlands G 3.75	Norway NK 15	Oman O 1.0	Pakistan R 70	Poland Z 2.70	Portugal P 200	Qatar QR 8.50	Romania RO 2.20	Saudi Arabia R 10	Slovakia SK 15	Slovenia SL 2.20	Spain P 200	Sweden SK 15	Switzerland SF 3	Thailand B 80	Turkey TL 1.750	Turkmenistan T 2.00	USA US 2.75
------------------	----------------	---------------	----------------	-----------------	---------------	-----------------	------------------	---------------	----------------------	---------------	--------------	-------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------	-------------	-----------------	---------------	----------------	-------------	----------------	-------------	----------------	-------------	----------------	------------------	---------------	-------------	--------------------	--------------	------------	---------------	---------------	----------------	---------------	-----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------------	-------------	--------------	------------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------------	-------------

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,430

Martin Walker meets Ben Bradlee

The world's most famous journalist

G2 with European weather

OnLine

Santa takes a ramble around the Websites

G2 page 12

Chris Smith MP

Why it's no libel to be called gay

This section page 9

House prices 'set to climb'

Sales support Budget gamble

Larry Elliott and Cliff Jones

THE Chancellor's Budget gamble to refuse further help to the property market appeared to have paid off last night as evidence emerged that the six-year slump in house prices is coming to an end.

With Conservative backbenchers identifying a revival in housing activity as vital to the party closing its huge poll deficit with Labour, figures released yesterday showed a sharp increase in pre-Budget mortgage lending last month. Kenneth Clarke had been under intense pressure to give home owners further tax breaks in the Budget, but he stood firm, stressing that steady growth and low inflation were the key factors for a healthy property market and a rebound in the Government's fortunes.

Yesterday's data show that even before the cut in interest rates last week, demand for home loans was picking up after lenders reduced mortgage rates in the autumn. Although a number of false dawns over the past four years made industry insiders cautious about the extent of the recovery likely next year, one City analyst said the market was "set for take-off".

Ian Shepherdson, economist with HSBC Greenwell, said: "The outlook for the housing market in the first half of 1996 is now very promising. Prices could rise by 3.4 per cent by the middle of 1996. This is good news for the Government — unless the Bank of England begins to fret."

Although lending is still down on a year ago, figures released yesterday by the Building Societies Association show an increase of over 12 per cent in gross mortgage lending last month to £2.95 billion, while lending net of repayments of loans almost tripled to £865 million. The value of mortgage ap-

provals — which indicates underlying demand — was up by almost 12 per cent to £3.22 billion last month, while the 48,000 new loans advanced was the highest since June.

Separate figures from the BSA data, with mortgage lending at its strongest since November 1994.

Part of the improvement in November was put down to a bounce-back from the lending slump in October, when advances fell to their lowest level since the Conservatives came to power in 1979.

Nevertheless, BSA director-general Adrian Coles said the November upturn, combined with the gentle improvement in house prices over the past two months, indicated there was "a real chance that the housing market will recover a touch in the new year". Mr Coles added that the three cuts in mortgage rates since September, which have brought rates to their lowest levels since 1988, and coming tax cuts should also bolster the housing market.

The Halifax Building Society, Britain's biggest mortgage lender, believes house prices should rise by 2 per cent in 1996, with transactions reversing their 10 per cent decline this year, followed by a rise of at least 5 per cent in both prices and transactions in 1997 and 1998.

The Halifax predicted a 5 per cent rise in prices this year only to see a decline of almost 2 per cent. Gary Marsh, head of group corporate affairs at the Halifax, admits: "We were a bit optimistic in the past. We got it wrong because of an unexpected double dip in the housing market, largely caused by the cutbacks in government support for home buyers and low consumer confidence."

With interest rates falling and tax cuts boosting incomes, he expects consumer confidence to strengthen in the new year, though he warned that the recovery would be limited by the lack of Budget measures.

Further hints that the housing market may recover were provided by Bank of England data yesterday showing the supply of broad money (M4), which includes lending by banks and building societies, grew by 0.3 per cent in the year to November.

The M4 measure is regarded as a good indicator of inflation and the 1 per cent rise last month took the seasonally adjusted headline figure above the Government's 3-9 per cent monitoring range for the first time.

Psychologists' photo test casts doubt on plan for identity cards

Chris Millill

PLANS to cut fraud by putting photographs on driving licences, and social security and credit cards are likely to fail because of the difficulty in accurately recognising photographs of strangers, psychologists said yesterday.

A team from the University

of Westminster tested supermarket cashiers with photo credit cards and found that half of fraudulent cards were accepted as genuine even though staff knew they were taking part in an experiment and were paying particular attention to the likenesses.

Apart from accepting false cards, the cashiers rejected a high percentage of genuine cards.

Blue santas to Bulgaria, snow to Scandinavia — Britain leads the world



Festive outlook for firm that wins export plaudits for putting a Byzantine spin on Christmas

Larry Elliott

HEARD the one about the company that has made a name for itself by selling blue Santas to eastern Europe? Of course you have; it comes after the gag in which the salesman flogs fridges to Eskimos.

Except in this case it's no joke. Festive Productions, a

small company based in Newport, Gwent, was yesterday being hailed as a trailblazer for Britain's export drive after its success in selling festive goods abroad came to the Government's attention.

Not content with dispatching the blue velvet-clad Santas to Poland, Czech Republic, Russia and

the 120-strong company has won some other lucrative, if improbable, orders.

There are the artificial Christmas trees sold in Lapland and the aerosol snow that has been going down a storm in Reykjavik.

"Scandinavia is an important market for us," said the managing director, Raymond Jones.

"And snow melts, even in Iceland, so children need something for their decorations."

The company, which was set up 13 years ago and exports more than a quarter of its £10 million annual

turnover, says the blue Santa idea came from intensive research into foreign markets. "It's a Byzantine theme which conjures up the Middle Eastern origin of the wise men and the colour of the midnight sky," said Mr Jones.

Hailing a big drop in Britain's trade deficit, the Industry Secretary, Ian Lang, said companies such as Festive Productions knew that "the ability to match the right product to the right market, at the right price, is the secret to competing successfully abroad."

The company says that

even in the UK, blue Santas are challenging the traditional red-cloaked version, and are popping up in retail outlets which have put on Christmas tableaux for their customers.

"We regard Christmas as a fashion industry," said Mr Jones, who has come up with a new range of Santas.

The catalogues for next year will be going out next week, and we have a very strong new theme. It's based on the Crystal Cave and has icy-blue, iridescent Santas. Very cold, very silver."

PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MORGAN

Major acts as royals' Mr Fixit

Edward Pilkington

JOHAN Major yesterday held private talks with the Princess of Wales amid growing speculation that her campaign to be given an ambassadorial role will be linked to a royal divorce.

The Prime Minister spent an hour talking to the princess at her Kensington Palace apartment, where she recorded the Panorama interview last month. No details of the discussion have been released, according to royal protocol, but it was divulged that Mr Major also held private talks last week with the Prince of Wales in St James's Palace — heightening the impression that the Prime Minister is playing a peacemaker role.

Both Buckingham Palace and Downing Street played down the significance of the meetings. The palace said such audiences with the Prime Minister occurred from "time to time", although no attempt was made to portray the discussions as routine.

Mr Major's office said his appointment at Kensington Palace yesterday had been fixed for some time. However, it is not known whether arrangements were made before or after the Panorama documentary, broadcast on November 20.

The last time the princess and Mr Major met privately was at least six months ago.

The Prime Minister's separate engagements with the royal couple at such a sensitive moment in their relationship underlines his developing role as an unofficial Mr Fixit. He is understood to have discussed the princess's demand for an ambassadorial role — first raised during the Panorama programme — at his weekly audience with the Queen two weeks ago.

He also silenced the Armed Forces Minister, Nicholas Soames, who had denounced the princess on the day after Panorama as being in "ad-

Turn to page 2, column 3

Serbs welcome British troops

Snowballs and brandy greet the Nato peace force as it crosses the front lines into west Bosnia

By Julian Borger in Krupa na Vrbasu



British forces go into action yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN COOMES

FOR 150 British troops it was a leap into the unknown. Treading where no foreign soldiers had set foot throughout the Bosnian war, a squadron of The Light Dragoons yesterday made the first Nato foray across Bosnian front lines into the Serb heartland of western Bosnia.

They came ready to use force in 30 armoured cars — each bearing an orange patch on top for the benefit of Nato aircraft — backed up with artillery flown into position by helicopter. But the show of strength proved unnecessary.

The local Serb population welcomed them with outstretched arms and open bottles of brandy.

At 11am yesterday Nato began its first day at work enforcing the Bosnian peace treaty, and found that, for all the posturing of the Bosnian

Serb leadership, its troops were welcome. When Mira Vucic saw the Warrior and Scimitar armoured vehicles flying Union Jacks turn a corner into Krupa na Vrbasu village, she could barely contain herself. On tiptoe she waved from her balcony, then ran down to embrace the British officers. She then started a snowball fight with Captain Ian Orr.

"We've been waiting since the beginning of the war," she said. "Now I know everything is going to be all right, and I hope my children will be able to play and grow up free."

Srdjan Vidovic, a 37-year-old glazier, ran into his house and emerged with a bottle of local homemade brandy, and distributed glasses to anyone in a British army uniform.

"These are the first foreigners we have seen here. Unpro-

for never came here, nor did the Red Cross," he said.

"I think these troops will be realistic and objective. I've always had a good opinion of British soldiers," he said. Old Nato air strikes were shrugged off. It was as if they had bombed a different country.

"There were no air strikes in my area," said Lieutenant Vitomir Brnjic, a Serb officer at the former frontline checkpoint at Breznica, five miles south of Krupa. "I believe they are neutral."

Armoured cars from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers had taken over Lt Brnjic's checkpoint, in the River Vrbas gorge, renaming it Black Dog, after a regimental pet.

The Light Dragoons set off from their bases in central Bosnia at dawn yesterday, to be in position at 11 o'clock, when the United Nations

commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith, handed over authority to Nato at Sarajevo airport.

At that moment, the Fusiliers drove off to "secure and dominate" Black Dog crossing. A few miles to the south Sea King and Lynx helicopters ferried howitzers to advance positions. Soon afterwards, The Light Dragoons rumbled across Black Dog and pushed seven miles into Serb territory, the limit of the howitzers' range.

Bosnian Croat forces caused the biggest problem of the day, holding up a convoy of IFOR and press vehicles. Capt Orr strode to the checkpoint and spelt out the new rules of the game.

"This is a very significant day," he told a Croat officer. "We are not Unprofor any more. We are IFOR. I don't want to use a delicate balance, but I have been talking to my boss, and he says if it is necessary we will just drive on."

The Croat officer looked vacant for a few moments and waved the convoy through. At a press conference in the base at Gorzji Vakuf the Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, said British troops remained ready to use force.

"The wish is to use persuasion and reason, but they have been equipped and configured in such a way that peace will be implemented one way or another," he said.

Report, page 6; Leader comment, page 6; Farewell, Bosnia, page 6

We were going to call it Bishops Finger. But, ooh, yes we did didn't we.



THE SERIOUS BEER WITH THE SILLY NAME.

Inside G2

Inside Story 4/5
Women 6/7
Screen 8/9
OnLine 10/13
Mooreover 14

Black Crossword 35
Cartoons 45
Radio 10
Television 16
Weather 16



9 770261 307347

Sketch

Flying in on a win and a prayer



Simon Hoggart

THE Commons yesterday discussed the Stupid Tax, or the National Lottery as it is also called. Virginia Bottomley said, several times, that this has been a huge success. So it has; it has taken billions of pounds from stupid people and given it to newsagents, depressed Somalis, opera-goers, various petty criminals and rapacious American millionaires, with exemplary efficiency.

MPs were contemplating the future of Peter Davis, the director-general of the regulatory body Ofcom, or Ofcol as it should be called. Mrs Bottomley has spared him, in spite of the fact that he accepted free flights from GTECH, an American gambling company with a large stake in Camelot.

According to Macmillan (Lib Dem, Caithness) GTECH "in the US has left a trail of charges in criminal courts... in which senior officers have been charged with bribery, fraud, corruption and other crimes."

On well, you can't win 'em all, as the lottery's punters discover every Saturday.

Mrs Bottomley explained that no personal gain for Mr Davis was involved. The company had offered to fly him round to "different cities which are not anywhere near main airline centres."

Perhaps that's what he told her, though as old US hands know almost no community is so tiny that it does not boast for example — the Dog's Breath, North Dakota, International Airport. Still, the flights would have given GTECH executives valuable time to get to know Mr Davis over the drinks and nibbles.

Mrs Bottomley said that the free flights were accepted only after the "main" lottery contract had been awarded. She then decided to do what ministers do whenever they find themselves in trouble: blame it all on the Labour Party.

First night

Soap, art and the feelbad truth

Lynn Gardner

Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club
Criterion Theatre

JONATHAN HARVEY turns out plays at the same rate that most of us write cheques. At 27, when most playwrights are just limbering up for their second or third effort, Harvey has written 10 plays and won three major play writing awards.

Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club follows Beautiful Thing, the fresh, funny, rites-of-passage gay love story that shot Harvey to prominence, into the West End, and while it is no less hilarious or touching, it has no feelgood factor and rather less obvious appeal. That's not to say that it's not the better play.

Scouser Harvey is often thought of as a soapish sort of writer, whose plays are more Brookside than the Bard. But there is real art in Harvey's artlessness. Just when you're doubled up with laughter he hits you where it really hurts.

Rupert Street is set in familiar Harvey territory, a dingy East London flatlet where Liverpool lad Shaun is pining for his Juliet, gone to Barbados on what is becoming an increasingly extended family visit. In the upstairs flat, Clarine, a Jesus freak whose party piece is singing Amazing Grace to the tune of House of the Rising Sun, has misplaced her name and identity and any sense of reality. Downstairs, George, an earnest teacher, is working her way through right-on causes and her Steeleye Span collection in a desperate attempt to find a

"Their victimisation of the director-general, the way he has been hounded and pursued by the party opposite, means they are unfit to govern."

This might have been more convincing if a few minutes later Mrs Bottomley had not been obliged to concede to Peter Hain that the trips had been taken before the contract for the scratch cards also went to Camelot, and that Mr Davis did indeed have an important role in deciding who got that contract.

Kevin McNamara (Lab, Hull N) produced the intriguing fact that 20 years ago Mr Davis and a GTECH director had become friends while attending (with their wives, presumably) the same birthing centre. Mrs Bottomley accused him of McCarthyism and said that such a fact hardly needed to go into the Register of Members' Interests.

I don't know. In my experience these birthing centres are like the Freemasons. Once befriended, never unbonded. When you've learned to practise going "Ah-hah, ah-hoo" rhythmically, over and over, in front of a dozen strangers, you don't quickly forget the experience.

Mrs Bottomley's best Christmas present was 12 MPs brown-nosing. Clearly under orders from the whips, they variously described Labour's queries about Mr Davis's judgement as "trivial", "foolish", "deplorable", "revolting" and "despicable".

Even Jacques Arnold (C, Gravesham), a man who makes Marley's Ghost sound like Rolf Harris, had been let out of his coffin to describe Labour's "obscene blood sports".

What I found particularly intriguing was that at the very moment Mrs Bottomley was getting ready to make her statement, staff from Ofcom were announcing that a QC has been appointed by Mr Davis to investigate corruption claims made by Richard Branson against one Guy Snowdon who is — wait for it — the head of GTECH.

This country is turning into a strange, slithering, rats' nest of cosy friendships and equally cosy corruption, in which everyone gets rich except the rest of us.

That's why we're so stupid, I suppose.

Police may ask Wardell about vice girl killings

John Mullin

DETECTIVES from several police forces may interview Gordon Wardell, jailed yesterday for murdering his wife, about a series of unsolved prostitute killings in the Midlands, it emerged last night.

Wardell, aged 42, of Meriden, Warwickshire, was beginning a life sentence after a jury at Oxford crown court unanimously decided he suffocated Carol Wardell and dumped her body near Nuneaton in September last year.

He had embarked on an elaborate charade to convince detectives that his wife, manageress of the Nuneaton branch of the Woolwich building society, had been abducted by robbers. He even wept at a press conference as he appealed for her "evil killers" to be caught.

Mr Justice Cresswell told him: "You are an extremely dangerous, evil and devious man. You killed your wife in a brutal manner and then cynically attempted to escape

detection by going to elaborate lengths to make it appear that your crime was the work of a gang of robbers."

The jury of 10 men and two women had deliberated for almost nine hours after a five-week trial. Wardell, an executive with a car components firm, gasped and looked to the ceiling as the foreman delivered the verdict.

A woman juror wept when details of Wardell's previous conviction for wounding with intent were revealed. He had stabbed the wife of one of his teachers in 1970, and was jailed for four years.

Detective Superintendent Tony Bayliss, who led the investigation, had discovered that Wardell regularly used prostitutes. He expected several police forces would be interested in talking to Wardell about unsolved prostitute killings.

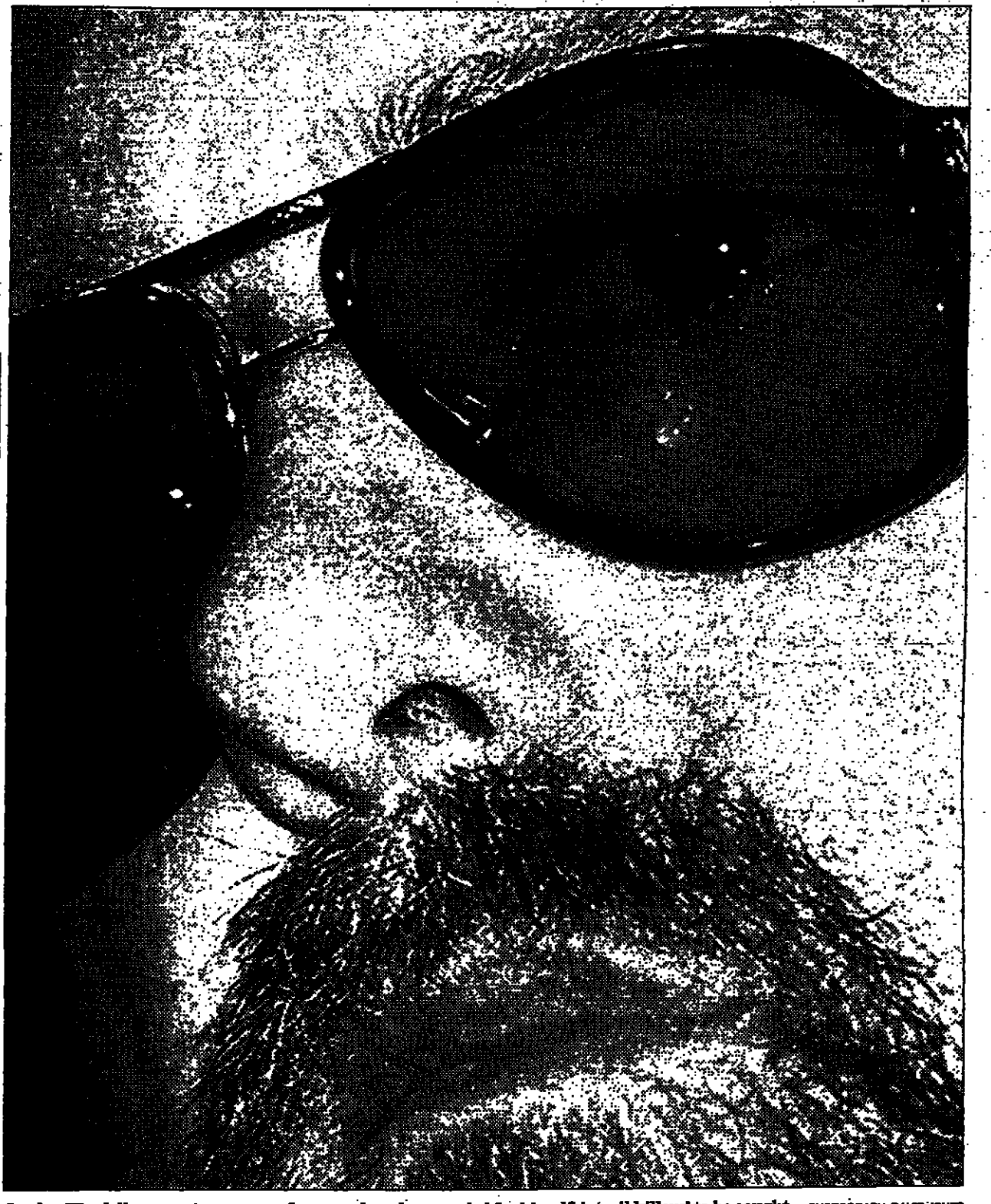
Last year Mr Bayliss met with officers investigating those killings. Detective Superintendent Kelvin Ashby, of Leicestershire police, is leading the hunt for the killer of prostitute Samo Paul, aged 20, whose body was found in a ditch near Swinford, Leicestershire, in December 1993. She had been strangled. Mr Ashby is also hunting the killer of Tracey Turner, another prostitute found six miles away in a lane at Lutterworth, Leicestershire, three months later. She was naked and had also been strangled.

Detective Superintendent Bob Rankin, of West Midlands police, is inquiring into the disappearance in October 1991 of Barbara Finn.

Nicola Payne, not a prostitute, disappeared in Coventry six weeks later.



Joan Heslop, victim's mother



Gordon Wardell weeps at a press conference where he appealed for his wife's 'evil killers' to be caught. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID JONES

Fatal flaws in a wife killer's crooked web

John Mullin on how mistakes involving a walking stick, a security light and an alarm code signalled to police that a 'grieving' husband was living out a lie

GORDON Wardell, a member of the Institute of Logistics, was well used to solving problems as an executive with a car components company. His solution to getting away with murder was brilliant — almost.

Wardell, aged 42, told Warwickshire detectives he had returned to his home in Meriden one Sunday night in September last year to find Carol, his wife of 12 years, held at knifepoint. She was manageress of the Nuneaton branch of the Woolwich building society, and the four-man gang was intent on robbery.

They knocked him unconscious and, drugged, he stayed that way until the next morning. Police discovered him, gagged and trussed, in the living room. 14 hours after he arrived back from the

Brooklands pub in Coventry. Wardell had told his bosses he was worried his wife might be abducted by robbers. A woman, perhaps a friend, telephoned Woolwich head office in London four days before the killing, posing as a staff member, Carol from Nuneaton. She wanted advice on how to deal with a suspicious character loitering outside.

Wardell suffocated his wife, and dumped her body at a lay-by north of Nuneaton. It was important the body was discovered early on Monday, and so he left it where it would be seen.

He entered the Woolwich at 5.30am, using his wife's keys, and tapping the security code 6511 into the alarm. It was his wife's personal number. He had seen her use it while waiting for her to close up. He used her keys to open a

safe, and stole £14,127.67. The money was never recovered. Further gain was to come from his wife's insurance policies, totalling over £100,000.

Wardell's masterstroke involved a pair of his wife's sandals. He placed the left one by her body and put the right sandal inside the building society, Angela Corrigan, district manager at Hinckley, recognised the sandal.

A motorist had spotted Mrs Wardell's body 75 minutes earlier on the road two miles away. There were no identifying papers, just the sandal.

As Wardell had calculated, police made the link. They arrived at his home, finding him tied up in only his underpants. At the hospital, his heart beat was found to be slightly raised, but his blood pressure was normal.

Detective Superintendent Tony Bayliss, leading the investigation, said publicly he believed Wardell, even when details emerged of his conviction for assault.

Wardell, then 17, had telephoned Brenda Hayes, 32, at home to lure her to a country spot in 1970. Her husband, who taught Wardell science at Woodlands School, Coventry, was away.

Mrs Hayes drove to the rendezvous with two of her three children, boys aged 4 and 5. Wardell grabbed her from behind, stuck a plaster on her mouth, and sprayed her eyes with deodorant. He indecently assaulted her and stabbed her twice in the neck. She escaped, and needed nine pints of blood to recover.

Wardell was charged with attempted murder. The prosecution accepted a reduced plea of grievous bodily harm. He was jailed for four years.

He was indignant when this episode was mentioned at a press conference four days after his wife died.

Although hospital staff had treated him with nothing stiffer than a cup of tea, he pitched up at the press conference in a wheelchair. He wore tinted glasses, apparently to hide behind. "I just want my

wife's killers caught," he rapped. "I've lost everything."

But a police operation to nail him was under way. He was asked to take part in a reconstruction. Ron Edwards, 55, and Paul Strumillo, 24, landlord and barman at the Brooklands, had not seen him in the pub. Police think he looked through the pub window, so that he could tell them what was on the television. But not a single lead was sparked by the exercise.

At his wife's funeral, four weeks after she was murdered, Wardell supported his widowed mother-in-law, Joan Heslop, aged 67, as they followed the coffin.

But Mrs Heslop said later that she had become convinced he was her daughter's killer. "It was a mother's feeling," she said.

Wardell had joined Veng UK, based in Hinckley, three months earlier, after a period

of unemployment. But he was performing badly, and faced the sack.

Following his wife's death, he went to Birmingham to see his wife's employers. He was emotional, said Graham Smith, regional manager. He was due a £56,604 lump sum, with a pension of £4,000 a year. His mortgage would be cleared.

He had arrived early and had wandered around Birmingham unaided, unaware police were videotaping him. When his appointment was due, he returned to his car to get his walking stick.

His story was crumbling. He had claimed his wife had eaten chicken casserole for Sunday lunch, 16 hours before she was, according to his version, at the building society. Post-mortem examination showed her stomach full of the lunch.

Experts believed his blows were self-inflicted. His hands were held by rose bush ties, but a gang would have had to search for these in the garage, ignoring flex ready to hand.

The couple's neat detached house at 18 Bonnevill Close had several anti-burglar devices fitted. But the outside security light was switched off.

Wardell had forgotten to switch it back on again after disposing of his wife's body. Questioned by police, he said it was off because it was erratic. But it functioned perfectly when they checked.

Another error came when he was questioned about the sandals. He used the past tense when asked where they might be.

And he had used his wife's own code when he disarmed the alarm. But there was, unknown to him, a distress code, which she would have used had she been taken hostage.



Gordon and Carol Wardell on their wedding day

PM acts royal go-between

continued from page 1
various stages of paranoia". Mr Soames is a close friend of Prince Charles.

The glaring split between the princess and the palace has focused minds on the possibility of an imminent divorce. It was announced on Monday that she will not be spending Christmas day with the royal family, in contradiction of an earlier announcement that she would be in Sandringham as usual.

A source close to the royals said the fact that Mr Major had held talks with the Prince and Princess of Wales so close together "does look like two plus two. If you choose to interpret it adding up to four, that would be understandable."

The royal couple separated in November 1992, which means they have long crossed the deadline for an instant divorce.

The princess told Panorama that she did not want a divorce, but had not discussed the matter with her husband. She added: "Obviously we need clarity on the situation."

Were both sides to give the go-ahead for an end to the marriage, court procedures — which include the filing of a petition and the granting of a decree nisi and decree absolute — would normally take between three and six months to complete. However, the process can be expedited in "exceptional" circumstances.



Police officer is jailed for having sex with underage girl in his car

A POLICE officer who had a 16-year-old girl with a 16-year-old girl was yesterday cleared of rape but jailed for 12 months for unlawful sexual intercourse.

Mr Justice Laws told Adam Grice-Roberts, who resigned from the Lancashire force during his trial at Preston crown court, that he had committed a "very grave breach of trust".

Grice-Roberts, aged 32, admitting having unlawful sex with the girl. The trial heard that he found her in an alleyway in Blackpool suffering from gas. He took her to the police station and was told to drive her to hospital. Instead he had sex with her in the back of his Rover.

The judge told Grice-Roberts that he accepted that he did not know the girl was under 16.

HURRY OFFER ENDS SOON!

UP TO **£40** WORTH OF **FREE** ACCESSORY VOUCHERS

PHONES FROM ONLY **£4.99** PLUS **FREE** CONNECTION TO VODAFONE HOTLINE OR PERSONAL WORLD

PLUS **18** **£65** FREE AIRTIME

VODAFONE Centre

MASSIVE CHOICE, BEST QUALITY, WIDEST COVERAGE

More than 100 branches nationwide, for your nearest centre call **0500 33 55 77**

Offer ends 31st December 1995. This offer is subject to certain conditions and is available while stocks last. The Vodafone UK Ltd or Vodafone World Ltd. Offers are subject to network coverage and availability in the UK and are not available in conjunction with the purchase of a Vodafone mobile phone. Please contact your nearest Vodafone Centre for more details. Available in stores at £4.99. Please bring the proof of identity with you to take part in the offer. *Excludes

سكان من الامم

Girl jumps to death 'in suicide pact'

Sally Weale

POLICE are today hoping to question an 18-year-old girl whose friend plunged to her death in an apparent suicide pact after a concert by the pop band Pulp. Two alleged earlier suicide attempts had failed.

Jessica O'Riordan, aged 18, died shortly before midnight on Tuesday after jumping from a hotel fire escape. Her friend, Sally Smith, said they were planning to jump together but she "chickened out" at the last moment.

The day before, Jessica jumped in front of a train at Southampton central station, but escaped unscathed after she slipped between the rails. Earlier the same day she and Ms Smith were spotted sitting on the edge of Itchen Bridge in Southampton by a policewoman who persuaded them to come down.

Jessica, of Brockenhurst, Hampshire, was taken to Southampton general hospital after the incident at the station, but was allowed home.

It was alleged last night that Jessica's mother, a social worker, had asked doctors to detain her daughter for her safety. Hospital spokesman Peter Campion said: "We are satisfied that the doctor acted properly as he believed the girl was going to get professional help." The doctor had acted in consultation with the family, a spokesman said.

Detectives were yesterday unable to get a clear account of events from Ms Smith, who was said to be deeply traumatised and under medical supervision. She told staff at the Marsham Court Hotel in Bournemouth, where Jessica died, that they had been planning "to go together". Assistant manager David Norris said: "I heard a girl

come in screaming that her friend had jumped. She said 'I'm sure she's dead. We were going to go together but I chickened out.'"

Mr Norris said the girls had emerged from the Bournemouth International Centre where they had seen Pulp, and made straight for a high-rise block of flats immediately opposite with the intention of jumping.

When they could not gain access, they turned to the hotel next door and climbed a three-storey fire escape. "Sally said she got her foot caught up in the railings. Then she saw her friend falling in front of her and she knew she couldn't do it. She was very distraught. She said Jessica grabbed at her coat."

Mr Norris said Ms Smith talked about previous suicide attempts. "She said they were too drunk on the previous two occasions to do it. They just ended up chatting."

The policewoman who found the two young women on Itchen Bridge on Monday said: "They seemed very happy and in no way suicidal. We even spoke about the subject and one of them told me she would never kill herself because she loved her Mum and wouldn't do that to her."

Last night, Det Insp Martin Edge, of Dorset police, who is leading the inquiry, said police were having difficulty getting a clear account because of Ms Smith's distress. "We will be viewing her medical condition to see if she's yet fit to help us."

Results of a post mortem yesterday have not been released. Hotel staff said the girls had been drinking but were not drunk and had not been taking drugs.

Jessica's sister Josie said: "My mother is devastated by this. We are trying to think why Jessie did it. She had no history of depression."



The Bournemouth hotel where Jessica O'Riordan died



Anti-graft crusader Antonio Di Pietro, whom prosecutors say should be put in the dock to face extortion and abuse of office charges

PHOTOGRAPH MARCO PESARESI

Italy's anti-corruption hero faces extortion trial

Prima facie evidence against man who challenged the mighty

John Hooper in Rome

THE idol of Italy's anti-corruption drive was last night facing the prospect of trial on charges of extortion and abuse of office.

Prosecutors in the northern town of Brescia said they had asked a judge to put their former colleague, Antonio Di Pietro, into the dock for using his position to obtain lucrative favours. They said a seven-month investigation had uncovered prima facie evidence that the prosecutor, whose implacable pursuit of the mighty broke the mould of Italian politics, had extorted a loan, secured an appointment for himself and a

contract for his wife, got a friend promoted and forced businessmen to pay off his friend's gambling debts.

But they also concluded that Mr Di Pietro's alleged misdemeanours were used by close associates of the former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, to force him out of the anti-graft crusade. Mr Di Pietro shocked the nation last December by resigning as a prosecutor just days before he was due to question the billionaire politician in a bribery inquiry.

The two Brescia prosecutors said last night that they had asked for the arraignment of the ex-premier's brother, Paolo, and the organiser of Mr Berlusconi's

party, Cesare Previti. The TV magnate-turned-rightwing-leader is himself due to go on trial next month charged with the very offences Mr Di Pietro was investigating.

An indictment of the former prosecutor would convince many of his compatriots that there can be no such thing as a principled Italian public servant. Mr Di Pietro's aggressive questioning of political leaders in the only big corruption trial to have been brought to court turned him into a national hero and helped speed the end of a political order dominated by the Christian Democrats and fuelled by kickbacks.

The value of shares on the Milan bourse fell 1.43 per cent on the news of the charges.

Though Mr Di Pietro intermittently denied political ambition, he did little else to stop himself being courted as a



Silvio Berlusconi: accused

possible future premier. He had also floated the idea of a movement committed to upholding honesty in public life. Last night's announcement

came at a delicate moment, with Italy's 1996 budget still blocked and its stopgap prime minister, Lamberto Dini, committed to resign as soon as it is approved. After almost a year of non-party administration intended to allow for wide-ranging reforms, there is still no agreement on a future political system.

Mr Di Pietro's lawyer said last night he feared the allegations would force his client to renounce any plans he might have for a career in public life. "Those who wanted that have succeeded in their designs," he added.

Paolo Berlusconi and Mr Previti vigorously denied any part in a plot.

The prosecutors in Brescia want their former colleague tried on the following charges:

Extortion of a 100 million lire (£40,000) loan in 1990 from

a businessman subsequently convicted of fraud.

Extortion of the same businessman to get him to place work with his wife's law firm and pay off the gambling debts of a friend, the Milanese police chief, Eleuterio Rea.

Abuse of office in connection with the appointment of Mr Rea.

Extortion in connection with the computerisation of the Milan law courts. It is alleged that he put pressure on the then civil service minister, Remo Gaspari, whom he had already put under investigation. He is said to have demanded he be put in charge of the project and then irregularly awarded a contract connected with it.

When Mr Di Pietro first came under suspicion, he alleged he had been the target of more than 100 attempts to discredit him.

Pressed men



Alastair Campbell
Tony Blair's press secretary
Labour Party

Age: 38, educated at Cambridge University. Joined the Mirror Group training scheme. He became political editor of the Daily Mirror, but quit when David Montgomery became editor, joining Today as columnist. He is tough, committed and argumentative.

● Tribune, April 95: "It was said that in getting rid of Clause 4, Blair would be 'dumping socialism.' On the contrary, I believe that the new statement rediscovers it and reconnects its values with the modern world. Collective action for the common good."

● Tribune, June 95: "There's one piece of intelligence I can impart with some confidence. The Tories have had it. But nobody should imagine former Tories are rushing to vote Lib Dem. They aren't."

● Tribune, April 95: "Labour rightly defended BBC journalism, which is generally excellent, and Mr Humphreys who showed once again in his interview with Tony Blair last Saturday that politicians of all parties can expect no quarter."



Charles Lewington
Director of Communications
Conservative Party

Age: 36. Educated at Bath University. Only five years in national newspapers. Moved from the Bath Evening Chronicle to become Westminster correspondent of the Western Daily Press. Joined the Daily Express becoming political editor.

● Sunday Express, Sept 95: "Ex-servicemen are to be drafted into the probation service to toughen up 'soft' community sentences for criminals. Home Secretary Michael Howard has won a Whitehall battle to prevent Britain's 10,000 probation staff acting like social workers."

● Sunday Express, Sept 95: "British justice was once the envy of the world. But today, amid growing government concern, decisions by our courts are increasingly being undermined by a group of lawyers handing out the decisions of the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights."

● Sunday Express, Sept 95: "Today the Sunday Express can reveal that prison does work because for the first time in 30 years, crime figures are falling consistently."

Major ratchets up spin doctor war

New press chief twice the man
Alastair Campbell is, Tories told

Michael White
Political Editor

AS CHARLES Lewington, the new director of communications at Conservative Central Office, gets into his stride the Prime Minister has put his personal seal of approval on the appointment by saying Mr Lewington is "twice the man Alastair Campbell is."

In his Christmas pep talk to party staff, Mr Major also addressed the question which has bothered many Tory MPs — the total access which Mr Campbell has as Tony Blair's personal press officer, compared with the layers of administration which ex-Expressman Mr Lewington has to cross to reach No 10.

Hugh Colver, an experienced Whitehall official and Mr Lewington's predecessor, quit less than six months into the job. He felt that a more overtly political figure was needed and that it was proving hard to get the Whitehall agenda into line with the party's need to articulate popular policies.

Colleagues recall Mr Major saying that "contrary to popular belief, Charles has access to me seven days a week, morning noon and night."

He also told the staff

party: "He is twice the man that Alastair Campbell is and more than a match for him."

What was more, the Prime Minister contended, Mr Lewington's job would be much easier than that of Mr Campbell because "Charles will have something of substance to say, unlike Campbell, who has to spin something on to a blank page from a blank mind."

Mr Lewington's task is made harder by that sort of build-up since frustrated ministers have become increasingly obsessed with Labour's packaging, which they contrast with what they insist is a lack of concrete policy.

A similar obsession was evident before the 1992 election when Peter Mandelson, now a Labour front-bench MP, was obliged to play the Campbell role, presented by senior Tories as a Svengali manipulating his party and the electorate. The theme reflects real fears that Labour is far better organised at every level.

Ministers feel that Labour has been making the propaganda running across key policy areas, and that they are frustrated into trying to counter Opposition charges.

Mr Campbell's team remains convinced it is too late to save Mr Major. In today's Tribune, Mr Campbell even questions Michael Heseltine's obsession with his own role — a poignant shift since the two were quite close when Mr Heseltine was in exile in the mid-80s and Mr Campbell was at the Daily Mirror.

Businesses transferring to Midland with turnover of up to £100,000 will normally pay our published small business tariff for 12 months but thereafter alternative terms may be negotiated. Larger businesses will pay negotiated terms. Midland Bank plc reserves the right not to open an account.



MIDLAND



What does 'free banking' actually mean to a new business?

The term 'free banking' seems to differ from bank to bank. Most banks will say that they offer free banking in year one, but as soon as you slip into the red you'll find yourself paying hefty charges. At Midland we've realised that it's unrealistic to expect all new businesses

to remain in credit for the first 12 months. So you won't be charged whether you're in credit or debit. When we say your banking is free, we mean it. To find out more about how to move to Midland, call in at any branch, fill in the coupon, or call us on 0800 180 180.

The Listening Bank

Member HSBC Group

For more information, complete and return the coupon to Midland Bank plc, Business Accounts, P.O. Box 757, FREEPOST, Hemel Hempstead HP2 4BR. If you have a Midland account, please fill in your sort code: 40 /

Name _____ Address _____
Town _____ Country _____
Postcode _____ Telephone _____

0800 180 180

GUM 2/12



The difficulty for police is that if a society has reached such a state of chaos and alienation that young people stab businessmen with the same casual clumsiness with which they steal toffees from sweet shops, all the commissioner's horses and all of his men really don't have a hope.

Nick Davies on a stabbing in Camden

G2 page 4

4 BRITAIN Cheating lawyer gets 10 years

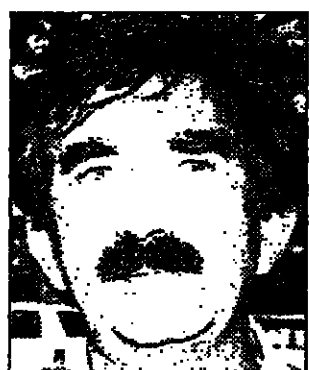
Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

A SOLICITOR who siphoned off more than £8 million from deceased clients' estates and defrauded hundreds of beneficiaries was jailed for 10 years at Maidstone crown court yesterday.

Graham Ford, a former senior partner of Durnford Ford, one of the biggest law firms in East Sussex, was described by Judge David Croft QC as "one of the most vicious conmen I have ever come across".

The judge told Ford: "The case against you was overwhelming, about as grave a case as one can have by way of dishonesty. You built a dunghill the better for you to crow upon. You cheated everyone who came your way. You cheated the dead."

Ford pleaded guilty last October to 10 specimen counts of theft. His partner, William Digby Bew, of Cirencester, Gloucestershire, who pleaded not guilty to four counts of furnishing false information, was convicted on Tuesday



Graham Ford: cheated dead clients' estates of £8m

and sentenced yesterday to 15 months, suspended for one year.

Ford, aged 52, used the money to prop up the firm, whose main offices were in Eastbourne and Hastings, and to fund a lavish lifestyle. He spent more than £270,000 between 1988 and 1992, including £220,000 on improvements to his house in an exclusive part of Battle, East Sussex, where he installed a swimming pool.

Before going bankrupt in 1994, he transferred the house to his wife, making it "untouchable", according to the Serious Fraud Office, which brought the prosecution.

Judge Croft said: "Transferring your house was quite obviously to cheat those from whom you stole."

A spokesman for the SFO said: "One of the unfortunate aspects is that the other partners, who were not involved in the theft, lost everything, including their houses."

The scam began in 1988 and ended in 1992 when the Law Society launched an investigation after complaints from disgruntled beneficiaries. The society, which has paid out more than £8.5 million from the Solicitors Compensation Fund, is suing the firm's accountants, KPMG, for not spotting the theft.

The court was told that Ford had kept beneficiaries in the dark about "grossly, almost ludicrously" excessive fees, in many cases leaving little or nothing for them to inherit. His victims included the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

The firm collapsed in May 1992.

Ford was struck off in July 1993 by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal, which branded him "a disgrace to his profession".

Railways sale running late, admits Young

Rebecca Smithers
and Keith Harper

THE Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, yesterday admitted for the first time that the Government had no chance of transferring all 26 rail passenger businesses to the private sector before the general election.

The disclosure was a boost for Labour, which would be elected, keeping any services that have not yet been sold under public ownership, and would gradually restore any privatised lines to public control.

The admission came as two management buy-out teams, LTS Rail and Great Western Rail, were confirmed as the next two private operating companies by the franchise director, Roger Salmon, following the award of the first contract for South West Trains to Stagecoach.

The only formal target the Government has set for privatisation so far is to have 51 per cent of the franchises let by April 1996, a deadline which it has been clear for some time it will fail to meet.

The first three franchises — London, Tilbury and Southend, Great Western, and South-West Trains, account for only 20 per cent of passenger services.

Pressed on how many of the franchises would be in private hands by the general election — assuming it is in May 1997 — Sir George said: "I would be misleading you if I said all 26."

He would not be setting any more targets, but the Government was confident of floating the track authority, Railtrack, in the spring.

The successful bidders for the next four franchises would also be announced.

27 years for burglar who 'gloried' in victims' terror

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

THE burglar calling himself Lucifer and said by police to have been one of the most dangerous and prolific in London, was jailed yesterday for 27 years, the longest sentence ever handed down for domestic robbery.

Keith Bramble, aged 36, was convicted on Tuesday of three robberies and an assault on police. The court heard that he robbed wealthy homes in north London and the home counties. Judge Derek Clarkson QC said: "It is a sorry feature of this case that the defendant gloried in the effect he could produce in

the wave of terror on those within the houses."

He said too many courts looked "with a certain intellectual detachment" on such crimes, without taking into account the effect on the victims. He hoped that any appeal court would consider the fear the attacks engendered.

He told Bramble he would serve concurrent terms of 21, 22 and 27 years for the three robberies. Anthony Gabbidon, aged 31, who accompanied Bramble on one raid, was sentenced to 16 years for the raid and 12 months, to be served consecutively, for wounding a police officer with intent.

Bramble, of Tottenham, north London, has already served six prison terms.



Terence Lee, aged 46, who sleeps rough, may benefit from 1st Avenue House, a shelter in High Holborn, London, opened this week by English Churches Housing. PHOTOGRAPH BY E. HAMILTON WEST

Heseltine weighs in against fish rebels

Government disarray in
Commons and the Lords

Michael White in London and
Stephen Bates in Brussels

MICHAEL Heseltine yesterday led senior ministers in a concerted rubbishing of Tuesday's Commons defeat over the European Union's common fisheries policy, coupled with a warning to Euro-sceptic Tory MPs that they could bring about a federalist government led by Tony Blair.

While Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, hammered home the party line that the vote exposed a government "in disarray, divided, limping along, unable to govern, and riven by acrimony," opposition whips in the Lords revealed similar embarrassment over the Criminal Justice Bill.

It has been introduced at such speed that ministers had to agree to suspend Tuesday night's session twice for further discussion on the code of

practice which will govern police handling of evidence relevant to prosecutions. "They fell apart," said a peer. In the Commons, Tory whips revealed that two absent MPs — as distinct from 25 who abstained or failed to vote — had turned up three hours late on Tuesday night and privately complained that Labour had more absentees than they did. "If they'd lost by two votes instead of winning by two, they'd have been having an inquest," said an MP.

It did not stop the deputy Prime Minister calling the 299-297 vote defeat "an aberration" and asking the rebels, "What are we in the business of doing? This isn't a sort of game, a sort of pat-ball, one way or the other."

The Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, was even ruder. Directly addressing the 11 Tory MPs, 10 sceptics plus the frustrated arch-federalist, Hugh Dykes, who abstained, he protested that

most "know little about fishing policy and care even less. They were there largely because they do not like Europe and it is not a reputable way to behave as Conservative MPs."

In what he called frank talking, ahead of today's crucial talks on lower EU fishing quotas in Brussels, Mr Heseltine used Radio 4's World at One to insist: "We are fighting to make this country the enterprise centre of Europe."

"If at the end of the year, a very tiny number of Conservative backbenchers pursue a very special agenda of their own, then the reality is that it gives a totally false impression to people who elected them, to the country at large, and to the international community."

In Brussels officials are bracing for an all-night sitting tonight to agree fish quotas for the coming year — and hoping that the proximity of Christmas will concentrate European fisheries ministers' minds.

Only once in the last decade has agreement not been reached before the start of the new year.

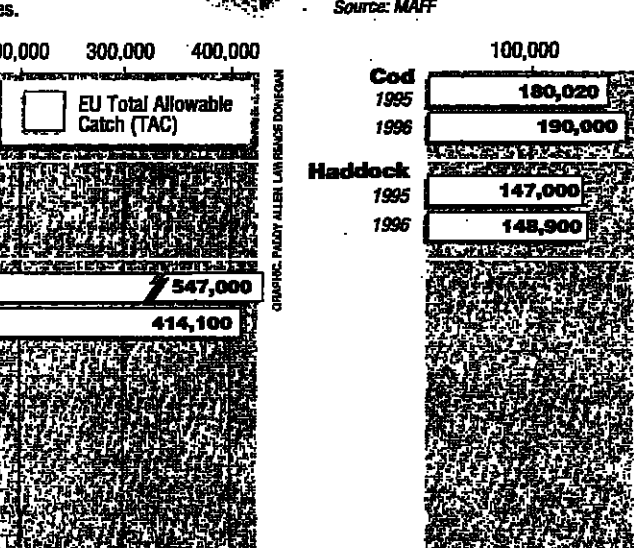
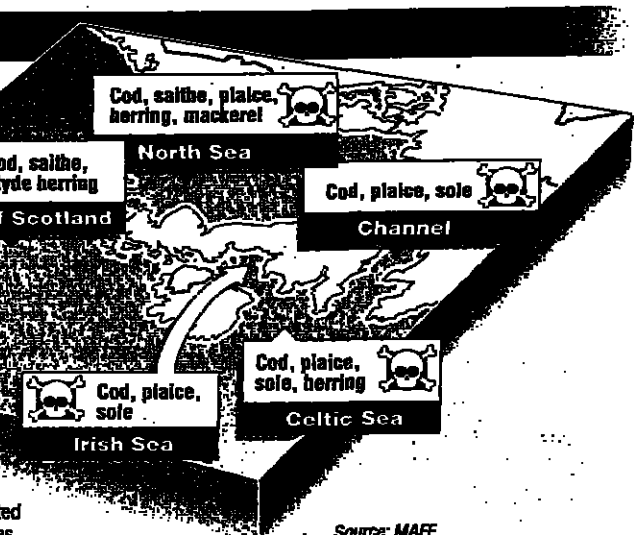
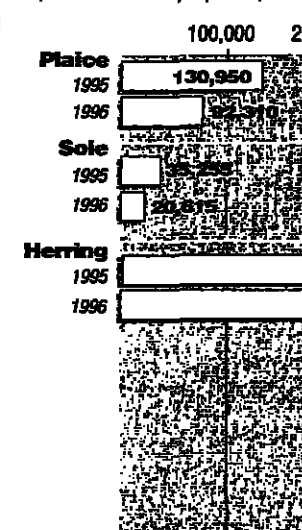
Fished out?

The fishery advisory committee of the International Council of the Sea says that UK waters are over fished. The EU Commission has proposed quotas based on that advice.

Fish near or below Minimum Acceptable Biological Levels

Who gets what

EU Total Allowable Catches for selected fish, 1995 and 1996 proposals, tonnes.



Chips down in quota talks as catches are slashed

Lawrence Donegan

EUROPE'S fisheries ministers meet today to negotiate the total catch each member state is allowed to catch next year. If past experience is repeated, it will be the Brussels equivalent of a bare-knuckle fight.

"I'm an inherent optimist," a smiling Tony Baldry, Britain's representative on the Council of Ministers, said yesterday. "I will have my priorities, my colleagues will have theirs. At the end of the day I

hope all of us can reach an agreement."

Already two things are certain: the catch landed by Europe's fishing fleets next year will be smaller, and any agreement will be opposed by many of Britain's fishermen.

The EU Commission has proposed big cuts in catches, saying that "drastic measures will be required to prevent further deterioration" in Europe's stocks. Each of Europe's 49 fishing areas is assigned a "total allowable catch" which is then divided among the members states ac-

cording to formulae determined by a number of socio-economic factors.

The commission's recommended catches for 1996, which are based on its internal scientific and economic advice, include a 30 per cent reduction of North Sea plaice and a 50 per cent reduction in North Sea sole. The catch of sole in the South-west is to drop from 950 tonnes to 560 tonnes, and that of mackerel from 870,000 tonnes to 247,000 tonnes.

The new Common Fisheries Policy explains the commis-

sion's approach. It says: "We cannot escape the fact that too many fishermen are chasing too few fish and that too many young immature fish are being caught."

Mr Baldry echoed those concerns but said he would oppose a number of recommendations relating to catches in the Irish Sea, the North Sea and the Western Approaches.

mended cuts which we have no problem with... The industry knows that if we get the conservation measures wrong then we face the real risk of the entire stocks collapsing. I am determined to achieve the optimum deal for everyone concerned."

But his efforts to placate Britain's fishermen are already hindered by the fact that the proposed cuts in catches for 1996 coincide with

the compulsory opening up of most British and Irish fishing grounds to the Spanish fleet.

Barry Dees, chief executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation, which represents 2,000 vessels, said last night there was widespread revulsion against the Common Fisheries Policy. "Inevitably, many of our members will be dissatisfied with whatever deal he reaches."

Monklands cleared of nepotism

Erland Clouston

A GOVERNMENT inquiry yesterday cleared Monklands district council in Scotland of nepotism and political and religious bias in job appointments.

The charges have dogged the Labour-controlled council for three years.

All 15 Labour councillors were suspended by the national party in June. William Nimmo-Smith QC, who conducted the inquiry, turned on their persistent critic David Shaw, Tory MP for Dover, whom he said had no evidence of substance to offer.

Mr Shaw was one of 77 people who gave testimony over the 10 days of public hearings, and has regularly raised the Monklands issue in the Commons. He called Mr Nimmo-Smith's findings "laughable".

The advocate, appointed by the Scottish Office this July, also had caustic words for Professor Robert Black, whose council-funded report triggered the council's suspensions and precipitated the government inquiry.

The Edinburgh University academic's reliance on an inexperienced helper and anonymous informants had meant his report had merely repeated allegations, Mr Nimmo-Smith said.

The council leader Jim Brooks welcomed the almost total vindication of his regime. "I am delighted once again that this council has been cleared of all the charges placed against it," he said.

In the only hint of criticism contained in an 83-page report compiled over four months, Mr Nimmo-Smith refers to Mr Brooks as "a strong-willed man who liked to exercise power".

The report will harden Labour's suspicions that the long-running saga of "Monklandsgate" was sustained by the Conservatives for elec-

toral advantage. Allegations of a corrupt, allegedly pro-Catholic, council distributing jobs on the basis of religion or kinship with representatives almost handed the Scottish Nationalists the seat of the late Labour leader John Smith at the Monklands East by-election.

The Nimmo-Smith inquiry is the most authoritative of seven past, planned or on-going investigations into an administration which will cease to exist in three months. Labour's inquiry, due to report on December 15 but postponed until the new year, was widely leaked to be calling for the expulsion of supposedly errant councillors.

Lottery 'bribery' inquiry launched

Andrew Cuff
Media Correspondent

THE National Lottery regulator, Peter Davis, announced an inquiry yesterday into bribery claims by Richard Branson.

Details of the inquiry were revealed as Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, was summoned to the Commons to answer questions about the conduct of Mr Davis, who accepted free flights from a Camelot shareholder, GTECH.

Mrs Bottomley reiterated her support for Mr Davis, yesterday, saying there was no question of his honesty or integrity being in question.

She accused Labour of attempting to pursue and hound Mr Davis out of his £84,000-a-year job.

Jack Cunningham, the shadow heritage secretary, said Mrs Bottomley and Mr Davis had shown an abysmal lack of judgment.

The inquiry into claims by Virgin Group chairman, Rich-

ard Branson, made on BBC1's Panorama, that GTECH's chairman, Guy Snowden, offered him a bribe to withdraw his lottery bid, is to begin in January, headed by Anne Rafferty QC, chairman of the Criminal Bar Association.

The Office of the National Lottery said her findings would be published. Mr Branson said the inquiry head should have been appointed independently of Oflot and the Heritage Department, and the review should be in public. All parties should have a right to cross-examine witnesses and it should also consider the procedures by which Mr Davis vetted GTECH when choosing who should run the lottery.

"Unless the proposed inquiry has these safeguards and is able to search for the truth without constraint, then it would lack public confidence and credibility," he said in a letter to Mr Davis. A spokesman for GTECH said: "We are very happy about the inquiry. We have nothing to hide."

Agreement on subsidy for Irish plant threatening British jobs clears way for peace meeting by Major and Bruton



Victims are beaten with iron bars and baseball bats until their bones are smashed. 'There's a lot of old scores being settled'

Gun law... Christopher Johnston (left) and Francis Collins, victims of peremptory justice

Peace fails to stop bloody IRA justice

David Sharrock

DIRECT Action Against Drugs is only the latest manifestation of brutal paramilitary punishment in Ulster which has, if anything, increased since the ceasefire. The group says it is responsible for the latest killings in Belfast, and promises it has not yet finished the murders. Nobody in Belfast seriously believes that DAAD is anything but the IRA in another guise. The lamentable handling of Sinn Féin's response to the killings has only served to make the republican movement's political wing look even more cynical over peremptory justice from the end of a gun.

A former leading IRA man Francis Collins was shot dead behind the counter of his fish and chip shop in the nationalist New Lodge area of north Belfast on Monday night. Police and his family both said he was not involved in the drug scene.

Christopher Johnston, 38, was shot in south Belfast as he arrived home from work on Tuesday night. He was on bail awaiting trial on a drugs charge after police tracked a car from Spain to Northern Ireland with a cargo of £250,000 of cannabis last December.

On the BBC radio programme Talkback, a Sinn Féin councillor Michael Ferguson refused five times to condemn the murder of Collins, sticking to the formula that Sinn Féin did not condone it. Mr Ferguson reminded listeners that drug-dealers were trading in misery and death.

The Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams came up with the same phrase and by late Tuesday evening, when news of Mr Johnston's murder was coming in, a Sinn Féin councillor could only lamely repeat that his party had made its position quite clear already.

Mr Johnston was the fifth alleged criminal to be murdered in Belfast this year. Unionists claim that by not labelling the IRA as responsible, the RUC is trying not to place the ceasefire in doubt.

The Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis said: "The most significant thing about the series of murders which

have occurred is the lack of response from both governments, in London and in Dublin, and from the SDLP at the highest level, each clearly striving to avoid the reality that these outrages represent a blatant breach of the ceasefire.

"The reality is that this, like the brutal beatings, is summary justice IRA style. It's time someone had the balls to challenge Gerry Adams and company in respect of the duplicitous and dishonest position he and his thugs claim to hold as champions of the nationalist tradition."

The founder of Families Against Intimidation And Terror Nancy Gracey, was yesterday taking calls from worried minor and ex-criminals wanting to know if they too were on a death-list.

"I had to tell one man that he was. We've details of two lists and there are, to my knowledge, 14 people who are under threat," she said. "There's a lot of old scores being settled here." According to the group's figures, there have been 87 loyalist and 175 republican punishment beatings since the ceasefire.

Young men, labelled as house-breakers or joy-riders, are beaten with iron bars and baseball bats until their bones are smashed. The attacks are more damaging than the pre-ceasefire method of a bullet in the leg, knee, elbow or, depending on how serious the alleged offence, a "six-pack" — which involves being shot through the ankles, kneecaps and elbows.

Last week saw the first two punishment shootings in a loyalist area since the ceasefire was called. The gun is creeping back into use. Ms Gracey believes this is because the paramilitaries are gearing up for a return to their campaigns of violence in the new year.

But there are alternative explanations. George Mitchell's commission on illegal weapons may suggest that if the IRA stopped the killings and punishment beatings, and made some stronger verbal commitment to the permanence of its ceasefire, then all-party talks could begin.

If so, the Provisionals might want to clear up some unfinished business beforehand.



Steel deal allows summit in Dublin

Julie Wolf in Brussels, Rebecca Smithers and David Sharrock in Belfast

AFACE-SAVING compromise over a plan to inject a £28 million subsidy into the loss-making Irish Steel was agreed in Brussels last night, paving the way for John Major to go ahead with a pre-Christmas peace meeting with the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, in Dublin today.

Deadlock between the two countries on the steel issue — which threatens more than 1,000 British Steel jobs in Stoke-on-Trent, Rotherham and Stocksbridge — had put into jeopardy today's planned meeting between the two premiers. Downing Street sources confirmed last night that it will now go ahead.

But while the problem over steel was being settled, further differences emerged between London and Dublin over proposals to hold fresh elections in Northern Ireland as a means of pushing the peace process forward. At separate press confer-

ences following yesterday's Anglo-Irish conference in Dublin, it became clear how far apart the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, remain.

Sir Patrick said he would look "very favourably" at any means of bringing the Northern Ireland political parties together. If a new assembly achieved that, it would "a very valuable thing". But when Mr Spring was asked if fresh elections in the North were now inevitable he replied: "No, I would not say that at all."

The agreement on steel thrashed out by British and Irish ministers allows Dublin to give £28 million to Irish Steel, subject to tough limits on the amount of steel the company will be able to sell in Europe over the next five years. Irish Steel is being sold to an Indian company, Ispat International, which had planned to increase the operation's output and product range.

Irish officials said that both sides had moved by 50 per

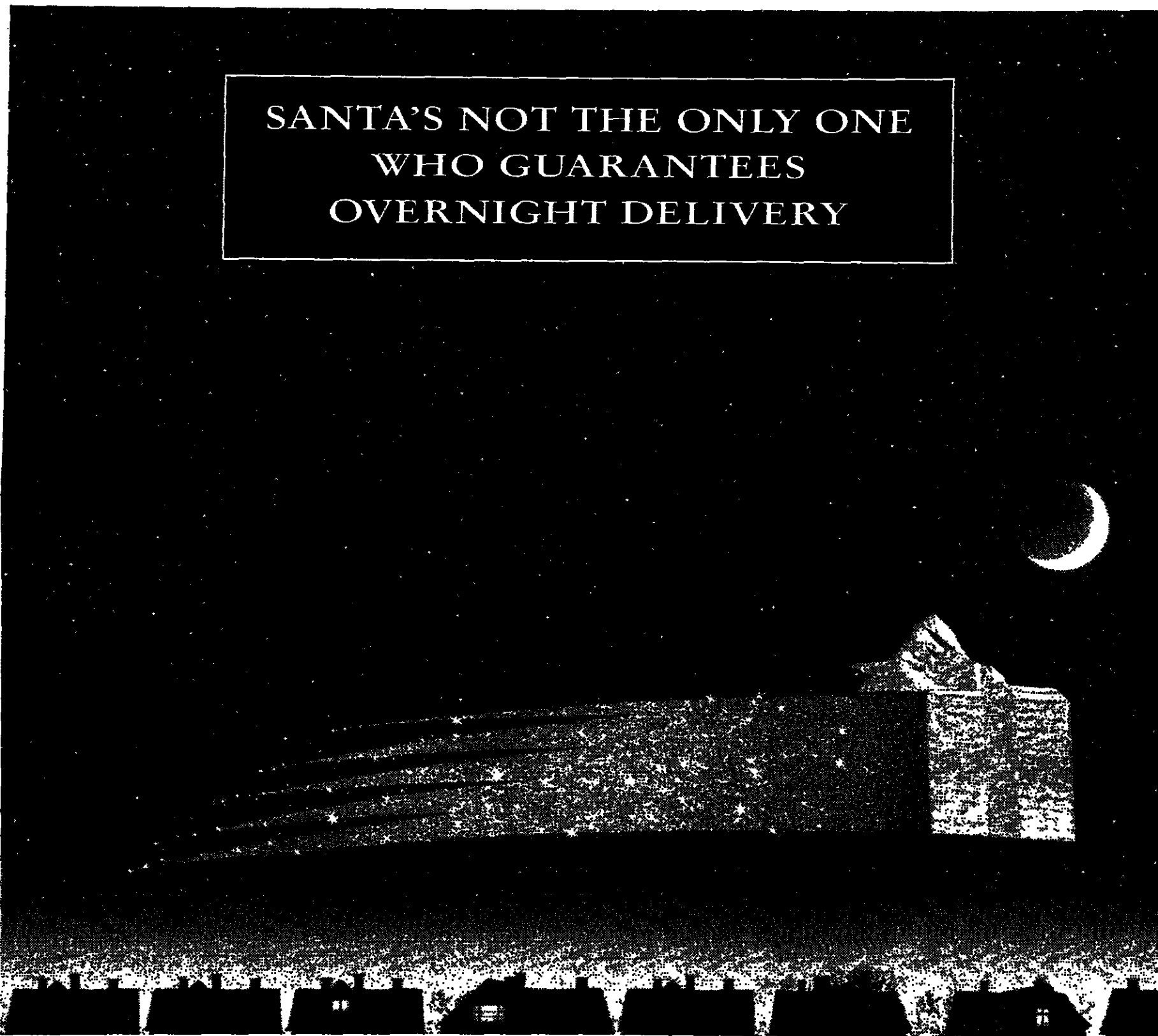
cent from positions held before they came to a meeting of EU industry ministers yesterday. But the Industry Minister, Tim Eggar, said: "It didn't feel like that."

Mr Eggar said he was "delighted" with the outcome which he said "goes a very long way to safeguarding jobs" at the British Steel plant in Shelton in Staffordshire.

Mr Eggar played down the connection between the tough negotiations over steel, which have taken up 30 hours of ministers' and officials' time over the past six weeks, and the peace process.

Under the steel deal, Ireland agreed that the Irish Steel plant in Cork will limit the amount of steel produced for the European Union market to 298,000 tonnes in the next year, rising gradually to 320,000 tonnes in five years' time. The aid package is £7 million more than Britain had previously been willing to accept, while the production limits were about 30,000 tonnes lower than Ireland wanted at the end of the five year period.

SANTA'S NOT THE ONLY ONE
WHO GUARANTEES
OVERNIGHT DELIVERY



Royal Mail's **SPECIAL DELIVERY** and **REGISTERED** services guarantee overnight delivery from just £2.95. And we deliver all year round, not just on one night.

Both Special Delivery and Registered will ensure your packages arrive by 12.30pm the next working day, virtually anywhere in the UK. However, if you're sending something valuable, Registered gives your items extra security and the added reassurance of up to £500 compensation in the very unlikely event your package is lost or damaged.

So if you want to guarantee a happy Christmas, talk to Royal Mail about Special Delivery and Registered on 0800 25 0800, or fill in the coupon.

Name _____
Job title _____
Company _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Tel _____

Return coupon to:
ROYAL MAIL,
FREEPOST,
BASILDON,
SS15 4BR.



Loyalist jailed for 10 years for UVF gun-running plot

ALEADING loyalist politician was jailed for 10 years yesterday for conspiring to run guns to the outlawed Ulster Volunteer Force.

Lindsay Robb, aged 29, was a member of the Progressive Unionist Party who took part in peace talks with the Government earlier this year at Stormont.

He and two other men were found guilty two weeks ago after a trial at the High Court in Glasgow. Three other men were also found guilty of weapons offences related to a plot to smuggle arms and ammunition to Northern Ireland.

Before sentencing, Lord Sutherland said: "I should say that the unhappy province of Northern Ireland has enough troubles of its own without interference of a deadly kind from anyone else from the outside."

John Johnston, 49, from Falkirk, central Scotland, was sentenced to 10 years for the conspiracy and arms offences.

Francis Hives, aged 45, a Liverpool pub manager, was sentenced to five years for

storing the weapons. William McArthur, aged 41, of Bonnybridge, near Stirling, was sentenced to eight years for weapons offences and conspiring to further by criminal means the purposes of the UVF.

David White, aged 29, from Airdrie, who was acquitted of conspiracy, was sentenced to five years on weapons offences. Alexander Davidson, aged 23, from Lurgan, Northern Ireland, was jailed for two years after being convicted of possessing two bullets.

The charges all related to a gun-running trip to Liverpool in July in which a semi-automatic pistol and a machine gun were picked up by Johnston, McArthur and White, who brought the weapons, together with ammunition, back to Scotland. Davidson was stopped by police at the Seacat ferry terminal at Stranraer.

Robb, Johnston and McArthur were found guilty of soliciting other persons to make available and to acquire arms and ammunition with the intention of endangering life.

Christmas trees, like everything else in the house, have become design statements about your very soul. This year the thing is evidently to hang chilli peppers on your tree.
Suzanne Moore's cool Yule

Polish president refuses to leave office quietly

Walesa claims PM spied for Moscow

Ian Traynor in Bonn

POLAND'S old and new rulers were thrust into a vicious power struggle last night when President Lech Walesa tarred the ex-communist prime minister with allegations of spying for the Kremlin.

Mr Walesa's assertion that national security is in jeopardy comes two days before he is due to surrender power to another former communist, Aleksandr Kwasniewski, victor of last month's presidential poll.

Mr Walesa, who shows no sign of going quietly into retirement and has launched a loud anti-communist campaign, effectively accused the prime minister, Jozef Oleksy, of contacts with Soviet and post-Soviet intelligence.

An emergency cabinet session attended by Mr Walesa last night discussed the allegations of a "grave threat to state security". But the interior minister, an ally of Mr Walesa, has given the military prosecutor's office documents allegedly incriminating the prime minister.

Mr Kwasniewski, who was post-communist who was minister under the old regime that Mr Walesa's Solidarity movement toppled in 1989, is

due to be sworn in on Saturday. It is unclear whether the allegations against Mr Walesa's latest stunt to retain power or whether there is any substance to them.

Adam Michnik, another key revolutionary and ex-Walesa adviser who no longer backs him, wrote in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the paper he now edits: "Nobody knows anything concrete. Three days before the president-elect's swearing-in, public opinion is swayed to expect that the stability of the state will not be harmed."

Mr Oleksy was due to go on national television last night to try to clear his name. Three key ministers — of defence, interior and foreign affairs — are Walesa allies who dissented from the cabinet verdict supporting Mr Oleksy, though a Russian foreign intelligence spokeswoman has denied that Mr Oleksy co-operated with the Kremlin.

Ever since losing the election, Mr Walesa has been seeking to mobilise the traditional rightwing opposition against the reformed communists in the Democratic Left Party, which controls the parliament, the government and, as of this weekend, the presidency.

Mr Walesa has said he will boycott Saturday's swearing-

in ceremonies. His supporters tried to have the elections annulled after Mr Walesa lost. And last week, in talks aimed at forging a rightwing alliance, Mr Walesa first hinted at the allegations against Mr Oleksy.

"This is top secret. It is dynamite. I have a lot of proof that our post-communist oligarchy has international connections," Mr Walesa was reported as saying.

He continued his campaign on Sunday in an emotional speech in the Baltic port of Gdynia to commemorate anti-communist protesters gunned down by the regime in 1970. "The blood on the streets of Gdynia was not the result of a chance coincidence. It was planned by party apparatchiks fighting for influence at the summit of power. For the six years of independent Poland we have been demanding that those guilty of that criminal provocation be found and punished," he said.

"Today evil goes unpunished. Lies are rewarded. Poland is humiliated. We will never reconcile ourselves to that. We will fight it until we have total victory."

Mr Oleksy called Mr Walesa's moves a dirty provocation, while Mr Kwasniewski has accused his defeated rival of "sinking over the principles of democracy".

Weak Juppé enters 'social summit' with little to offer

The French prime minister needs to pull off a political conjuring trick to save his skin, writes **Paul Webster** in Paris

ALAIN JUPPÉ, whose future as prime minister is on a knife edge, goes with some trepidation into a "social summit" today with French trade unions and employers, both of whom view him with anything from suspicion to hostility.

After a public sector strike which has cost industry about \$2.5 billion in lost business, Mr Juppé's entourage admits he has little to offer in the short term. Government statisticians have forecast gloom for the French economy in 1996 even without the threat of renewed industrial unrest after Christmas.

If the Insee (government statistics institute) forecast proves true, then by spring France will be in deep trouble, with growth and consumer spending stagnant and unemployment set to rise to 12.5 per cent — well over 3 million. And that is not counting about 100,000 redundancies expected as a result of strike-provoked bankruptcies in small business, shops, restaurants, tourism and the construction industry.

"The social summit should contradict public feeling that the prime minister is not a man of dialogue, but in the present economic conditions no one has yet solved the puzzle of how he can please unions and employers while satisfying European Union demands for budget austerity to meet single currency criteria," an aide of Mr Juppé said. "Of course, if Mr Juppé succeeds, there will be no more talk of a replacement."

In reality the prime minister faces confident opponents at the talks, convinced he will go early in the new year. Trade unions have never been so buoyant since mem-

bership went into decline during the 1980s, a period dominated by the left. Marc Biondel of Force Ouvrière and Louis Vianet of the Communist-led CGT were behind six recent demonstrations which assembled some of the biggest crowds since the second world war. Teachers and students marched beside postmen, energy workers and other public-sector staff.

Even with fewer than one in eight workers — most of them in the public sector — paying union dues, demonstrators also paralysed public transport for more than three weeks and then suspended the strike on their own terms. Mr Juppé had to scrap a railway restructuring plan, such as the railway chairman, drop a review of pensions and retreat from privatisation. Although he was able to hang on to proposed welfare cuts, the timetable and eventual savings depend on today's talks.

Because he bought off strikers with concessions he had



Alain Juppé: more enemies than friends

ruled out a month ago, Mr Juppé has shaken his other "social partner", the national employers' council, Jean Gandois, its chairman, fears a hidden agenda — appeasement on salary restraint in the hope of stimulating a consumer-led recovery. Unwelcome government interference could result in an increase in the minimum wage and a cut in the 39-hour week to buy off protests.

"I am only attending this meeting to make sure that government policy does not drift," Mr Gandois said.

With more enemies than friends, Mr Juppé has to pull off a political conjuring trick to confound the prediction by an aide of President Jacques Chirac that the prime minister "may survive the winter but not the spring". He is more unpopular than any government leader for nearly 40 years and more than two-thirds of the electorate consider union protests to be justified.

Mr Juppé, the Gaullist RPR party chairman, is also under attack by the most powerful people inside his movement: the former prime minister, Edouard Balladur, and the anti-Maastricht campaigners Charles de Gaulle and Philippe Seguin. Nor is there much warmth from the junior coalition partner, the Union for French Democracy (UDF), which blames Mr Juppé for the loss of seven national assembly seats to the left in recent by-elections.

"This country is not being governed by a strong single policy," said the UDF leader and former French president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. "The president must intervene to tell us which course he is taking."

The cabinet approved a bill yesterday to amend France's constitution to give parliament, instead of trade unions and employers, ultimate control over welfare spending.

French checks 'to stay'

John Palmer in Brussels

FRANCE is to maintain national controls on its borders with the Schengen group of European Union countries for "a few months more", the government said yesterday. Confirmation of the extension of French frontier checks — introduced after terrorist incidents earlier this year attributed to Algerian Islamic militants — came at a meeting of home affairs ministers from the seven Schengen countries in the seaside town of Ostende.

Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain and France had agreed to scrap internal frontier controls by the end of this year. But the French government has cited the need for border checks on potential terrorists, and complaints about drug trafficking between the Netherlands and France, to justify its delay in implementing the pact.

"We need another few months to move definitively the functioning of the Schengen agreement," the French minister for European affairs, Michel Barnier, said.

He said co-operation with the Netherlands and other Schengen states to control the drugs trade had improved in recent months but was still not sufficient. "We know that the Dutch legislation is causing problems for us," Mr Barnier said.

Although the French authorities have recently relaxed the stringent passport controls which were imposed after the first bombing incidents in the summer, the government is not ready to phase out all border controls. "The Schengen aim is to increase security in our common area but we still want more from the agreement," a government spokesman said in Paris yesterday.

The other Schengen countries appear confident that the agreement will be fully implemented next year. "France has already dropped passport checks on flights [between Schengen states] and is co-operating closely on the issuing of visas and appeals for political asylum," one European Union diplomat said.

The Schengen states have improved co-operation between police and drugs au-

thorities, and have agreed to expand shared criminal intelligence data held on a common computer system.

They also expect to bring the five-country Nordic group — Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland — into the frontier-free zone in the near future. Although neither Iceland nor Norway are members of the EU, they have already scrapped all internal border controls with the other Nordic Union states.

Austria, Italy and Greece have said they wish to join but have yet to fix a date. Britain and Ireland have insisted on retaining their national frontier controls.

Cars should sip their fuel, not guzzle it, the European Union environment commissioner said yesterday.

"We must move from gas-guzzling to gas-sipping cars," Ritt Bjerregaard told a news conference at the launch of a plan aimed to cut carbon dioxide emissions from passenger cars.

The EU has pledged that by 2000 it will have cut carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels to 1990 levels, a target environment ministers say is achievable.



Question time... Poland's prime minister, Jozef Oleksy, addresses a news conference after meeting the parliamentary speaker, Jozef Zych, to discuss President Walesa's allegations of a national security threat. PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRZEJ RYBCZNSKI

Limp UN hands baton to a robust Nato

Srecko Latal in Sarajevo

NATO's task of policing Bosnia's peace began yesterday with a terse "get on with it" from the American admiral commanding the mission and brisk moves to establish the alliance's authority on recent battlefronts.

As Admiral Leighton Smith gave the order formally launching Nato's biggest operation ever, units in the peace implementation force, IFOR, were already deep in territory still riven by the hatreds of almost four years of slaughter and brutal expulsions.

"This country is not being governed by a strong single policy," said the UDF leader and former French president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. "The president must intervene to tell us which course he is taking."

The cabinet approved a bill yesterday to amend France's constitution to give parliament, instead of trade unions and employers, ultimate control over welfare spending.

With Bosnia's rival factions often mocking the lightly armed United Nations peacekeepers whose mission ended as Nato's began, the actions of the Western alliance's troops were calculated to show that they meant business.

Much of the 60,000-strong Nato force to enforce the peace deal agreed in Dayton, Ohio and signed last week in Paris is yet to arrive. But more than 1,000 troops have landed, and thousands of UN peacekeepers from Nato countries simply switched over to IFOR yesterday.

"Gentlemen, it's time, let's get on with it," Adm Smith said after he landed in Sarajevo for a formal handover at

its battered airport. Adm Smith missed the actual transfer of authority at 11am local time because fog initially prevented his plane from landing.

At the United States base in Tuzla, only one out of a scheduled 30 flights arrived before fog shrouded the airfield. Just 670 US soldiers of an eventual 20,000 have made it to Tuzla so far.

Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, the commander of Nato ground troops in Bosnia, announced the handover in a brief statement before Adm Smith and Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier of France, the UN commander.

Relinquishing his ill-conceived mission, which had confounded and divided the West throughout its three-year duration, Gen Janvier told Adm Smith: "Let me hand over to him not a trembling flame but a bright torch of peace."

Adm Smith tried to calm fears that heavily armed Nato troops were a menace.

"We are not here as a bunch of cowboys looking for a fight," the admiral said. "We are not threatening anyone."

The Nato mission, Operation Joint Endeavour, aims to keep the factions separated by heavily patrolled zones while Bosnia rebuilds.

Rajko Kasagic, the newly

appointed leader of the Bosnian Serbs, who have protested against the reunification of Sarajevo under Bosnian government control, struck a realistic note.

The Tanjug news agency reported that Mr Kasagic appealed to all Bosnian Serbs to co-operate with Nato "to secure peace for them and safety — because our future will depend on that good co-operation."

The International Monetary Fund said yesterday it had approved Bosnia's membership and granted it an emergency \$28 billion credit.

Leader comment, page 8
Forewall, Bosnia, page 9

World news in brief

Crashed plane was chartered by Unita

AZAREAN plane which crashed in Angola on Monday killing 141 people was chartered by Angola's former rebel group Unita, its senior military official said yesterday. It was the worst air disaster of the year.

Urban Tichamba, the Unita envoy at peace talks with the Angolan government, said the crash happened near Jamba, the group's former stronghold. An Angolan government

official said earlier yesterday that the plane crashed in a Unita-controlled area near the Zairean border. There were 141 people on board the flight from Kinshasa, including five crew.

An inquiry is under way to determine the cause of the crash. One theory suggested a link with the diamond trade. Many of the diamonds mined in Angola are smuggled out via Zaire. For many years Zaire was accused of support-

ing Jonas Savimbi's Unita rebels, who controlled much of the diamond area. Unita has signed a peace deal with the government.

Many private airlines operate out of Zaire, with relatively few controls over safety and maintenance. Last year, Zaire's acting foreign minister and a Tunisian presidential aide were among nine people killed in a crash on the approach to Kinshasa's Ndjili airport. — Reuters.

Papandreou on life support

The condition of the Greek prime minister, Andreas Papandreou, has worsened and he is now constantly on a respirator, the latest hospital health report said yesterday.

Mr Papandreou, aged 76, has been in intensive care in Athens with pneumonia since November 20. — Reuters.

Haider attacked

The Austrian Freedom Party leader, Jörg Haider, was attacked by Chancellor Franz Vranitzky yesterday for saying during a television interview that he did not know the post-war Nuremberg war crimes tribunal had branded the Waffen SS a criminal organisation, adding: "It doesn't interest me in the least." — Reuters.

S Africa killings

Gunmen have killed nine more people in South Africa's volatile Zulu heartland, adding to a grim toll of more than 13,000 victims of political bloodshed in the province in

the past decade. Police said the victims of attacks on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast, four of them children who were burned to death, were members of families which supported President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress. — Reuters.

Reactor reopens

The French government authorised the restart yesterday of L'Yso's Superphenix, the world's largest fast-breeder nuclear reactor, shut down since October. — AP.

Teenage mafia

Police in Bari, southern Italy, said yesterday they had arrested four teenagers, two of them aged just 14, for running a junior version of a Mafia clan. All four were suspected of the attempted murder of another minor. — Reuters.

Algeria bombing

A bomb explosion in the Algerian town of Mostaganem yesterday wounded at least 22 people, three seriously, and caused extensive damage, the Algerian official news agency APS said. — Reuters.

Dead poets optional

DEAD European males have suffered a fresh setback: Georgetown University, Washington, plans to allow students to graduate in English without studying Chaucer, Milton or Shakespeare, writes Ian Katz.

English students are currently required to study at least two of the authors but the university says it wants to update its course, making the literary giants optional.

Some students have complained, saying that the change reflects a decline in standards, but the English department backed the adoption of a more flexible syllabus by four to one.

"Shakespeare is in no danger of disappearing from the curriculum," said Professor Bruce Smith, director of graduate studies. "Students have more integrity and seriousness about their own education than people give them credit for having."

Spanish Steps ready for tourists

ROME yesterday reopened one of its most famous tourist attractions, the white marble Spanish Steps, closed since May for renovation. The 18th century baroque steps, which offer some of the best views of the city, were cleaned of pollution, weeds and graffiti in a \$280,000 facelift.

The city hopes to keep the steps pristine by enforcing

bans on eating and drinking there. Vendors will also be banned.

Built between 1723 and 1726, the steps are a masterpiece of architecture. Linking the Piazza di Spagna with the church of Trinita del Monti. In recent years they were occupied by trinket sellers and became a popular meeting place for young tourists. — Reuters.



"The Church has built into its structures discrimination against women, and to some extent I do resent that. It's a compromise and it may be the best we can do at this time, even though I don't like it."
The progress of women priests

G2 page 6

Syria's ace in a game of patience



PM Shimon Peres: Ready to discuss 'all issues at once'

As the Israelis and Syrians prepare to renew aborted talks, **David Hirst** in Beirut asks if President Assad will ever make peace

PEACE negotiations between Israel and Syria, which were broken off in June, are to restart for the umpteenth time two days after Christmas, but on this occasion the expressions of optimism and pious hope are more sonorous than usual. Israel's prime minister, Shimon Peres, says that since the establishment of the Israeli state he could not recall "such a Syrian response to our proposals" — it was "a new game, a new time, a new beginning". His foreign minister, Ehud Barak, described the Syrian president, Hafez al-Assad, as "flexible and creative".

Returning these accolades, the Damascus newspaper al-Thaurah said that Mr Peres was "speaking a new language that commanded attention". The United States secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said he had heard the "very clear desire" of both President Assad and Mr Peres "to press forward". US officials even spoke of a deal within three to four months. But is this optimism any more valid than the pessimism that returns whenever things go wrong? In June, talks between military representatives on security arrangements broke down. Israel's former prime minister, the late Yitzhak Rabin, seemed to grow gloomily obsessed with the idea that

President Assad fundamentally rejected peace. Reverting to familiar rhetoric about Damascus as "a centre of international terrorism", Mr Rabin began to sell this line both to the Israeli public and the US. Syria replied in kind. President Assad said that, since the Madrid conference in 1991, there had been "no progress at all". The Damascus press said that Israel was, once again, "breaking the wave of international optimism". On past form, the new talks will break down in due course. In fact, the Israelis could be right about President Assad's deep reluctance to secure a settlement. Not because the Syrian leader is still bent on a now impossible military alternative, but because he knows that acceptance of the best peace on offer would amount to an historic failure, so central has Palestine been to Ba'athism.

Even if the Syrian people do want peace, they would also want the removal of the regime that made it — or at least democratic change. But until the "best peace" is offered, President Assad's intentions are unknowable. What is known is that he has a definite conception of peace, that, as he put it recently: "The position we take is always the same." So if there is optimism in Damascus, it is not because talks are being renewed, but because it believes Israel has changed to make that possible. In fact, Damascus does have ground for satisfaction, for believing Mr Rabin's assassination brought about a change which could prove more far-reaching than any that have revived talks in the past. The Israelis more or less concede this. It was Rabin, not President Assad, who had been procrastinating: if he could not go into elections

with a negotiating triumph, he preferred no talks at all. Mr Peres says that he puts peace above the polls. Where Rabin was obsessed with security arrangements, Mr Peres is ready to discuss "all issues at once". If Israel has shifted, that is gratifying — but it can and must shift further still. That is what President Assad is no doubt saying to himself — and he is prepared to wait for it. He can wait not because he feels strong. On the contrary, it was a huge shift of the balance of power in Israel's favour that brought President Assad to direct talks in the first place. But, equally, he does not feel so weak, isolated and besieged that, as al-Thaurah put it, he has "to join the other [Arab] clowns in the circus of peace". President Assad will hold out for the best settlement in the belief that Israel will eventually offer it. He clearly

believes that Israel, and Mr Peres in particular, has far more to lose than he. President Assad knows that Syria holds the promise of peace with the whole Arab and Muslim world, or threatens the eventual collapse of the peace Israel has achieved so far. Israel and the US are arguing the ball is now in Syria's court. On Friday, the al-Bath newspaper said this was wrong. "The ball never left Israel's court in the first place, for it has never even tried to throw it into an Arab court." Clearly, President Assad will only consider that the ball is in his court when Mr Peres comes out with the one thing he is waiting for: an unequivocal promise to withdraw from the Golan. Syrians do not doubt that Israel wants peace — on its terms. Only with such a pledge can the Israelis find out whether President Assad wants any peace at all.



President Hafez al-Assad: Intentions are unknowable

Slave display dropped after 'correctness' row

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

THE Washington establishment was plunged into yet another bruising row over political correctness yesterday, as an exhibition on slave life in the old south was cancelled after black groups said it was racist. The Library of Congress announced that it had scrapped "Back to the Big House: The Cultural Landscape of the Plantation" after black workers at the library said they were offended. The collection of photographs and accounts depicting the daily life of slaves in the American south had won wide acclaim travelling around the US, before its arrival in Washington. But African-American staff members, and officials took offence at the "show" and within two hours of its installation it was withdrawn, library officials confirmed. The cancellation is the second by the library this month. Two weeks ago the library scrapped a show on Sigmund Freud, after anti-Freud

academics claimed Freudianism was a discredited theory. "There is an atmosphere of fear at the library now," one official told the Washington Post. He added that the Freud exhibit was withdrawn because managers feared the religious right would condemn sexually explicit material in it and pressure the Republican-led Congress to cut the library's funding. "This time it's fear of maybe a dozen black staff. This is all really scary," he said. About 20 black employees complained about the plantation display, taking particular offence at pictures of slave quarters. They also disliked the term Big House, slave parlance for the white plantation master's mansion. Disgruntled black employees sometimes refer to the Library of Congress itself as the Big House — a reference to alleged racial discrimination by management there. More than 2,000 employees won \$8 million (\$5 million) in a law suit against the library in 1982. The cancellation has raised new fears about the grip of

political correctness on American freedom. Critics claim that no idea can be aired in the US unless it offends no one. Earlier this year, the Smithsonian Institution was forced to scale back its display of the Enola Gay — the plane which dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Both Japanese and US veterans groups had complained that initial drafts of the exhibition had depicted them as villains. In the end, the Smithsonian offered a much-diminished display, showing just the aircraft with only the slightest commentary. "It's almost McCarthyite," said Peter LaBarbera, Director of Accuracy in Academia, a Washington-based pressure group committed to fighting political correctness. "There's a tendency among too many blacks to label anything dealing with race as racist. The word 'racist' is being used as a club, to bludgeon ideas rather than to hear them out," Mr LaBarbera said. He added that "guilt-ridden" white officials were often to blame for exercising censorship.



Tibetan Buddhist monks demonstrate in New Delhi yesterday in protest at China's detention of Gendun Chyoki Nyima, the six-year-old boy the Dalai Lama has recognised as the reincarnation of his faith's second highest spiritual leader. Beijing recognises another boy. PHOTOGRAPH: KAMAL KISHORE

Oil sanctions fail to rock Gadhafi

US diplomats admit defeat on attempts to tighten curbs, writes **Ian Black**

SEVEN years after the Lockerbie bombing, the United Nations sanctions against Libya's oil industry have had little serious effect, while powerful European opposition and British caution are forcing American attempts to tighten the noose. As families of the 270 victims of Pan Am flight 103 today mark another grim anniversary, diplomats, Libya-watchers and oil analysts agree the punitive measures are barely working. And there is no sign, officials admit, that they will achieve their goal of forcing Colonel Muammar Gadhafi to hand over, for trial in Scotland or the United States, the two intelligence officers accused of the bombing on December 21 1988. Privately, Britain acknowledges that the issue is stuck.

John Major rebuffed a call by President Clinton last month to work to amend the limited UN sanctions, arguing that to do so might open a Pandora's box of opposition from European and non-aligned countries. "Soundings from the highest level of the British government have not been encouraging," one American diplomat said. "Their political judgment was that opening the issue at this time might even weaken the consensus rather than strengthen it." Britain has few direct oil interests in Libya but this year sold \$195 million worth of other goods. Italy, Germany and Spain buy nearly 80 per cent of European oil imports from Libya. Their strong opposition has prevented further tightening of

the sanctions, imposed in November 1989 after an earlier ban on air links and defence sales. UN resolution 683 banned the sale of some equipment for Libyan refineries and oil export facilities, but experts say the officials who drafted it specified mostly US equipment and forgot that European parts could be used instead. Smuggled spares have also enabled the Libyans to maintain production levels — 1.5 million barrels per day of high-quality crude. Industry sources say Iraq, under far more crippling UN sanctions, is one of the countries involved in smuggling spares. US attempts to secure a full oil embargo have been abandoned and officials are now focusing on the damage being done to Libya by its inability to upgrade its refineries. "The sanctions will have an effect over the long term, say 10 years," said Judith Gurney

of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. "But as a means of changing the government or getting it to hand over the two Lockerbie suspects, they are not productive." In the short term, the UN ban on air travel may be more damaging, permitting the use only of arduous overland routes via Tunisia and Egypt. Libya, bizarrely, last month cut off the Malta ferry link. Its physical and economic isolation may be partly relieved by the creation of a new duty free zone in the Tunisian port of Zarzis. A US oil services company has already set up there. Political isolation, perhaps the most main effect of international pressure, was keenly felt when all the Maghreb countries took part in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue with the European Union in Barcelona last month. Signals have been sent that it could all be different if Lockerbie were resolved.

BECOME A PIONEER

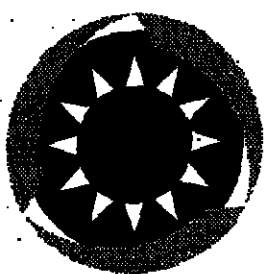
Europe Online invites you to participate in the creation of the first European Online Service.

You will receive 20 hours* free access to: the Internet, E-Mail and the latest news, entertainment and shopping services.

Call now on
0800 1066 10

or access our web site on

<http://www.EuropeOnline.com>



Europe Online

*No membership charges until 31.1.96, offer subject to status and availability and limited to the UK. Access is free for 20 hours, but telephone charges to access the service will apply. Europe Online UK, Kingsgate House, 536 Kings Road, London SW10 0TE. DBR-FOA-95GAR1

Barbie dons her Kenyan collection

Greg Barrow in Nairobi

TOYSHOPS in Nairobi have never seen anything like it. "Did you know," ask newspaper advertisements, "Kenyan Barbie is in town!" This is a bold attempt by the international toy maker Mattel to break into the African market; even more brazen when you consider that each doll costs about £40. The manufacturers have taken the design for black Barbie and dressed it in traditional Maasai cloth and jewellery. Kenyan Barbie even has gripping hands to carry a water pot on her head. At a toyshop along Bishara Street, the shelves of Kenyan Barbies were still full. "We all identify with things like this as Africans," said one shopper, Helen Githongo. "But the price should be more within the reach of ordinary Kenyans." "So far, in a week, we've sold about 60, which is quite good for a Kenyan market," said Anand Shah, a toyshop owner. But most of the buyers were foreign tourists.

Australia puts Britain on spot over nuclear tests

Ian Black Diplomatic Editor

AUSTRALIA is bringing its anti-nuclear campaign to London, with a demand that Britain explain its policy on deterrence. Gareth Evans, the foreign minister, will today ask Malcolm Rifkind to clarify British nuclear strategy in a year which has seen the indefinite extension of the non-proliferation treaty on the terms of the great powers and unprecedented anger over French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Australia has spearheaded Pacific opposition to the French tests and found itself in conflict with John Major's "extraordinary" pledge of support for Jacques Chirac at the height of the testing row. Paul Keating, the prime minister, promised Mr Major "a dip round the ear" while Mr Major told fellow Commonwealth leaders their views on the nuclear issue were "inaccurate, inconsis-

tent and unbalanced" — language Mr Evans yesterday called "combative". Mr Evans said his government still did not know what Mr Major meant when he met President Chirac in London in late October, shortly before the Auckland conference, and pledged "mutually to strengthen deterrence". He said yesterday: "This really lent itself and still lends itself to no other interpretation but that Britain and France see themselves as being in the nuclear business into the harshest — not only in terms of retaining present capacity but, if words mean anything, then actually strengthening that capacity." Australia played a key role in negotiating the unconditional extension of the NPT last summer and shared the widespread sense of betrayal when China immediately continued testing and France decided to resume its programme — in breach of a pledge to exercise "utmost restraint". The US, Britain and Russia have all stopped

testing. Now Australia is lobbying for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty in 1996 and looking beyond that with the formation of a commission of experts to draw up practical steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Canberra commission — the first government-sponsored project of its kind — is composed of political, military and scientific heavyweights, including the Nobel peace prize laureate Joseph Rotblat, the former French prime minister Michel Rocard, and the former US defence secretary Robert Macnamara. It meets for the first time in the new year and will submit its report to the UN in the summer. Mr Evans said the commission hopes to force the world's five declared nuclear weapons states to "get absolutely serious about non-proliferation, not just in the never-never but here and now". Britain, he said, "has to work out precisely what it wants to stand for".

Not just a fuss about fish

Mr Major is back in serious trouble over Europe

IT'S NO USE trying to pretend that it didn't matter. Taken literally, the government's defeat on fish quotas in the Commons on Tuesday means only that the House declined to "take note" of the Government's intentions: embarrassing, sure, but nowhere near fatal. This was no doubt the basis of yesterday's hopeful claim that John Major was feeling "relaxed" about it. But on every other count, this was dire news for the Prime Minister: the equivalent, coming so close to the Christmas recess, of losing a vital wicket in the over before the lunch interval. Very bad for morale, and leaving a cloud behind it which the opposition will see to it will not have dispersed when the game resumes.

The episode serves to illustrate how difficult it is for a Conservative prime minister in the present party climate to hold the show together on Europe. There is no kind of general will. On an issue like this the Prime Minister finds a disparate coalition of interests arrayed against him. The ideological hard man (and woman: Teresa Gorman) are as usual the core of the discontent: people wholly out of sympathy with the whole European entanglement, making in cases like this demands for British self-determination which are basically incompatible with continuing EU membership. But in this case, their case is echoed by others not normally of their persuasion, but allied with them for pragmatic, constituency reasons. People like David Harris, MP for St Ives, a former parliamentary private secretary to that textbook European, Sir Geoffrey Howe, but unable at moments like this simply to say to constituents: I understand your difficulties, but Europe comes first. In the end, it is true. Mr Harris voted with the Government. But the fact that moderates like him backed the rebellion must have given those who rebelled a deeper incentive. There is little the whips can do.

Trying to discipline the rebels would only, as before, prove counter-productive, especially when so many at the grassroots instinctively cheer every presumed attempt to roll back the mandate of Brussels.

Even more galling for government business managers, perhaps, was the presence, in Tuesday's cast list of the obstreperous, of the arch-Europhile Hugh Dykes, using this chance to signal his discontent (shared by others on his wing of the party — listen to Edward Heath) that the Government's commitment to Europe is feeble and faltering. All of which underlines the uncomfortable truth that John Major's bold venture last when he put his leadership on the line and challenged his party critics to dump him wasn't the final solution which supporters claimed at the time. A party too long in office, divided and incoherent in its search for new ideas, and ravaged by an issue — Europe — which transcends routine allegiances, cannot find calm, even though all the disputants know that continuing public division is the surest route to perdition.

For a government which claims it's committed to a positive line in Europe the problem remains what it's always been. When they look at the score sheet, people in Britain, apprehensive for their jobs and their futures, tend to be far more conscious of the downside of membership, of the sea rights ceded to Spain, than they are of the real and potential benefits. The Labour side, understandably, were exultant on Tuesday night, but if and when they get into government, situations like this will confront them too. Tony Blair and colleagues need to do the work that has been so much neglected of making the EU enterprise one which ordinary voters can feel is engineered in their interests; not simply ordained for them by an out-of-touch and protected elite.

Bosnia and the dog that bites

Hard political judgement will be needed on the use of force

THE CHANGE of mandates in Bosnia is a time for summing up the past and peering into the future. The glib judgement that Nato has taken over because the UN has failed is wide of the mark. Rivalry between the two organisations — displayed yesterday at the ceremonial bickering in Sarajevo — should not obscure continued realities on the ground (where many of the soldiers concerned are simply changing berets). The Paris agreement has presented the task of peace enforcement in a new form but it was not easy before and it may not be much easier ahead.

The reasons for the UN "failure" in Bosnia cannot in the main be blamed on the UN but originate with those who failed to give it sufficient backing — not least some who are now championing the new I-FOR operation. Nato's own house magazine, NATOREVIEW, sets out the facts in a lucid analysis by the British professor of war studies Lawrence Freedman. There was nothing intrinsically wrong in adding "safe areas" to Unprofor's remit if only extra forces had been provided at the time. The UN's attempt to stabilise Bosnia was crippled by a "half-hearted" commitment which inhibited all initiatives beyond the supply of food and medicine. "It is as difficult to have a marginal intervention", Professor Freedman concludes, "as it is to have a marginal pregnancy".

The Nato force now taking up positions in Bosnia — once it can get through the fog and ice — is certainly

not marginal in size. But intentions are as crucial as ever. General William Nash, the new "military viceroy" of eastern Bosnia (as the US press, now in exuberant Yanks-are-coming mood, describes him), is credited from Tuzla with a revealing quote. As for the burden of keeping peace, says Gen Nash, it is up to the Serbs, Croats and Muslims. "They don't need me to separate them; they could separate themselves... If they don't want peace, there will not be peace" (our italics). This sentiment, uttered by a cigar-puffing Vietnam veteran, is not many miles away from the shoulder-shrugging "this is the Balkans" philosophy which permeated so much of European thought over the past four years. It begs the question: what if the two sides don't pull out of the agreed zones of separation within a month? What if they have not vacated the territories scheduled for exchange within three months? Or pull back their heavy weapons to designated areas within four months?

Yesterday there were no obstacles to the well-publicised swinging into action of Nato troops who "swept past" Serb checkpoints. Whoever first breaks the peace agreement incurs a heavy penalty and we must hope that the habit of peace will help guarantee its preservation. But if that fails, then hard political judgement is needed on the use of force. Nato may be "the dog that bites" (Gen Sir Michael Walker) but — just as during the UN's tenure — someone still has to slip the leash.

Setting a limit on exclusions

There is no easy solution for handling disruptive children

IF only the Chinese proverb was true: no solution, no problem. Disruptive children in school are causing even bigger headaches to headteachers. Schools are caught in an ethical dilemma. Whose rights are more important: disruptive children with genuine needs of their own or the other 30 non-disruptive children in the class? More and more schools are choosing the JS Mill option and protecting the happiness of the greatest number. A year ago heads lost the right to impose an indefinite exclusion on disruptive children — on the grounds that too many pupils were being left in limbo. Instead exclusions were restricted to 15 days a term. But instead of a reduction in exclusions, the number has increased because pupils have been permanently excluded. Exclusion numbers more than tripled in three years from 3,000 in 1991 to 10,600 in 1994. Now ministers are having second thoughts. A report pub-

lished yesterday by school inspectors on the low standards in the latest form of alternative education (pupil referral units) will increase their concern.

Headteachers argue that indefinite exclusion gave them more negotiating power in setting down conditions which had to be met before the pupil returned. One compromise the Education Secretary is looking at is aggregating the term limit into an annual total: 45 days a year. With more energy injected, Gillian Shephard's September package which included 20 experimental task forces to support schools and more school-based units for pupils potentially at risk could help. So would other preventive measures like contracts between schools and parents, cooling-off periods and limits on the number of excluded pupils any school has to accept. But even JS Mill and his felicitous calculator would not find a perfect solution.



Letters to the Editor

The day Myra Hindley stalked me

A very uncivil privatisation

I HAVE more interest than most in hearing what Myra Hindley has to say (December 18) as I was very nearly a victim of these two monsters. I have only told this story to my family and to very close friends but I feel the need to inform your readers — should any of them feel any sympathy towards Hindley — why she should not be in prison.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, I attended St Pauls Junior School, Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge. My parents were divorced and I lived with my mother close to the school. One afternoon I was making my way home up Huddersfield Road when a car, being driven by a woman, pulled up at the side of the road (I think it was a green Mini).

A man in the passenger seat opened the door, leaned out and asked me my name. I hesitated and then told him. He said that he had been sent by my mother to pick me up from school and told me to get into the car. I asked where my mother was and he told me that she was at home. I asked which home? This seemed to throw him a little and I remember the driver (who I later realised was Hindley) telling me to hurry up and get in as my mother would be angry if I was late home.

I asked Hindley what my mother's name was because I thought that they were mistaking me for someone else. She answered something like: "Don't you remember us? We are very good friends of your mother's and she was always visiting our house. I said something like I had never

seen them before and she said: "You are always in bed when we come visiting."

She was very convincing and I nearly got into the car but there was something wrong with their story which set alarm bells ringing. I ran all the way home. When my father came home from work I asked him if my mother was coming home. When he said she wasn't, I was convinced that these people had got the wrong person and thought no more of it.

Hindley states that she was instrumental in procuring the children. I have first-hand experience of this. Without her, the crimes would have not been committed. When she tried to lure me into the car she knew exactly what she was doing. She is a cold calculating murderer and should have been hung.

She says that she serves the interests of many parties: the tabloid press for whom she is a national scapegoat; the Government to show that they are tough on crime and the prison service. No one needs you, Hindley, except the mother of Keith Bennett: why don't you tell her where you have buried her son?

If Hindley keeps playing the sympathy vote then one day she may be granted parole. If that day arrives, I along with millions of others, will make sure that her freedom is short-lived. I will not do her any harm; I will entice her into my car and deliver her to a couple of mothers who want more than a quiet word with her.

Trevor Smith, Tameside, Greater Manchester.

IN 1968, not long after Hindley's trial, a close relative of mine, a girl aged seven, was murdered near her home by a middle-aged male neighbour. Her body was found four days later in a trunk in his flat. He pleaded guilty, and few facts emerged. He was sentenced to life, and with his co-operation was probably freed in the late 1970s to start a new life.

At that time there were no social panaceas like stress counselling or Victim Support. A stable and responsible working-class family, we were just left to carry on. Nearly 30 years later, the girl's mother is alone, her marriage gone, under psychiatric care after several suicide attempts. Her surviving children have all had troubled lives, involving professional intervention. All adult aunts and uncles of the girl have needed psychiatric or psychological help.

Compared to Hindley's crimes, this incident scores relatively low on the Guardian's "scale of depravity". Yet the damage is endless. Murder of a child for an adult's pleasure is a cosmic obscenity. It will not go away.

I read Hindley's article carefully for any hint of recognition of the true nature of her crimes. I found it thin, vague and self-serving. She might have been entering a guilty plea for burglary. Anybody Cassidy, Marple, Cheshire.

IN MY experience as a psychologist, some young women between the ages of 15 and 20 become fascinated by male arrogance. They are totally dominated by such a man. Ten years later, they are

amazed at their naivety and despise him. This cycle accounts for a number of divorces.

The effect of an attractive girl's adulation on a vain, selfish man is to make him want to prove he is even tougher than she supposed. Killing gives some men a sense of power. It is the ultimate manifestation of distorted masculinity. Once his partner has become involved with him in his cruelties she is trapped. To inform on her husband is to inform on herself. The Myra Hindley of those subservient years is not to be confused with the mature Myra Hindley.

(Dr) James Hemmings, Broom Water, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9QJ.

DR BOB JOHNSON shows that men and women who commit horrendous acts of violence were terrorised as children by fear through abuse or fear of abandonment (Society, December 13). Like all traumatised individuals, they remain frozen in their development. A 50-year-old convicted for murder is still the five-year-old he once was, terrified of his now 80-year-old mother. The pain and fear of childhood turns into murderous rage.

Hindley writes that she too was terrified of her father's violence and unchallenged power. Brady elicited the same feelings in her and, in their perverse coupling, they found the power of revenge. (Dr) Felicity de Zurena, Psychiatrist and consultant psychotherapist, Charing Cross Hospital, London W6.

WRITE in support of Lord Bancroft's views concerning the decision to privatise the Recruitment and Assessment Services of the Civil Service (An ethos up for sale, December 20). He is right to question a decision which weakens a safeguard of public-service standards.

The implications for the security services are worrying. Recruitment to these have not always been of the best — as seen in the long run; but at the top they have been good. The public service and the public good are not best served by political ideologies, and governments do eventually change.

Lord Merlyn Rees, (Former Home Secretary and Northern Ireland Secretary.) House of Lords, London SW1A 0AA.

THE Government's belief that there is nothing special about the public service is encouraged by the absence of any statutory — let alone constitutional — underpinning of the Civil Service. Ministers can disband it at will, and privatising recruitment to it is a logical first step. Its White Paper of July 1994, Continuity and Change, contains the statement: "Like many other large service organisations, the Civil Service has been confronting the need to manage reductions of size in its workforce as a result of competition..."

This is a perilous, and indeed pointless, journey. The Civil Service's integrity is one of our few undisputed constitutional assets. To introduce major changes in the way we are governed by the stealthy means of a written Commons reply is to make a mockery of the democratic system. We need a proper debate not just about the Civil Service's role, but about the nature of the public interest which has become confused with the special interests of the government of the day and of the corporate sector.

Andrew Puddhephatt, Director, Charter 88, 3-11 Pine Street, London EC1R 0HJ.

Lord Bancroft forgot the conclusive argument against more privatisation: he need only consider the number of his ex-colleagues who pioneered the process and who are now running the new or privatised industries and public utilities. It would be safer to call a halt now.

Des McConaghy, 10 Faulkner Street, Liverpool L8 7EZ.

The Cook retort

THE Cook Report's investigation into John Carter has been widely misunderstood by Mr Carter and his legal advisers, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, and now The Guardian (Inside story, December 19). We never suggested anything was wrong with Mr Carter entering clinical trials of a medicine he claims to have developed while working on animals. Our criticism is because he offered patients a 95 per cent chance of a cancer cure, and dismissed chemotherapy as "3 per cent successful"; ridiculous claims, as the BBC agreed. A qualified medical practitioner could not have prescribed Mr Carter's "medicine" (he even refuses to let his scientific partners analyse it) to human cancer patients, as it is untested and unlicensed. If a doctor cannot properly prescribe it, it is absurd for an acupuncturist to claim to be able to do so.

We believe Mr Carter is morally and ethically wrong to prescribe this medicine and to offer a 95 per cent prospect of a cure. We remain astonished the BBC cannot understand this argument.

All Mr Carter's evidence was checked and we stand by our every word. Contrary to the impression you give, Professor Gordon McVie still thinks the programme was "honest and fair". He deplores Mr Carter's attempts to treat patients with an untested, unlicensed so-called medicine.

Our programme on cot deaths was not "irresponsible reporting" but an investigation on the views and work of eminent independent scientists whose research was more far-reaching than the Government's interim report. We stand by our programmes and by Mr Cook. Your highly personal attack on him was both unwarranted and unfair.

Steve Clark, Controller, Factual Programmes, Carlton UK Television, 101 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4AZ.



A display of animal passions

JOHN Gray's piece on the British public's growing concern for animal issues (Close down the supermarket of nature, December 19) was pointing in the right direction. Many doctors, scientists, scholars and "ordinary" citizens are opposed to the day, necessary cruelty inflicted, for example, on laboratory animals, where the results of animal tests are so inconclusive that the nation's health and finances would be better served by scrapping vivisection altogether.

When a pro-vivisectionist such as Dr Ralph Heywood revealed in 1988 at a Ciba Foundation scientific workshop that the accuracy for animal tests relating to the harmful side-effects of drugs in people is only between 5 per cent and 25 per cent, it is time we realised once and for all that animal experimentation is a waste of time, money and lives.

(Dr) Tony Page, Founder, British Anti-Vivisection Association, PO Box 4746, London SE11 4XP.

WHAT is John Gray's definition of nature? Is it the fields and hedgerows shaped by farmers? Or the graves of the dead dug which are now home to countless species of birds? Maybe he prefers the open expanses of Scotland which, until we cut them down a thousand years ago, were covered by the pines of the Caledonian Forest? Perhaps Mr Gray feels closer to the fox or rabbit to which he has applied human emotions and needs?

Mr Gray is correct when he says we are "one species linked with others as interwoven strands in the fragile web of life on Earth", and that is exactly why we farm animals, hunt animals and play with them. In fact, the only reason animals are tolerated in the numbers they are is because man is so inextricably linked to them.

Unlike the anthropomorphic Mr Gray, who wants to turn the countryside into an amusement park, I have no intention of robbing animals of their dignity by assigning them human values.

Charles Walker, 5 Inworth Street, London SW11 3EW.

A wise man

THE GUARDIAN seems determined to paint me in the guise of an unrepentant sexist, something of which I would be thoroughly ashamed if it were remotely true (Chancellor picks Wise Women for Treasury panel, December 20). I am very pleased indeed that the Chancellor's decision to appoint Kate Barker and Bridget Rosewell to the Treasury Forecasting Panel will bury the lousy term "wise men" forever. Perhaps you would now like to appoint some males to your panel, so that you no longer epitomise the unacceptable face of sexism.

Gavyn Davies, Member of the Treasury Forecasting Panel, 23 Lloyd Square, London WC1X 9AJ.

A Country Diary

SPEY BAY: Even from the outside, the Tugnet Ice House is impressive, particularly as it is standing where the wide estuary of the river meets the Moray Firth. The Ice House is reputed to be the largest one to have survived and it now contains a summer exhibition on the history of salmon catching in the area. The building is dated 1830 and measures 19 by 17 metres and it can be seen from some distance, looking like three barrel-vaulted structures set in sloping ground. The trade must have been very important to the economy of this coastline as records from 1842 indicate that the London market took 600 boxes of salmon packed in ice, each weighing 15.4 kg and worth 55. As if epitomising the role of salmon in the area about 50 metres away in the rapidly ebbing tide, there were several grey seals and two mature bulls were each tackling a large salmon. Birds were floating out on the water such as goldeneye and red-breasted mergansers while redshank and turnstone flew

over. Then there were waders everywhere, including common snipe that were calling as if alarmed. The reason was a male hen harrier that was flying low over the reed beds — hunting. I walked along some of the raised mounds of pebbles separating the sea from the estuary and there, tucked on the landward side of one ridge and protected from the cold wind, were a party of about 100 dunlin that from the distance looked like grey foam scattered on the pebbles. The old boats outside the Ice House, they were called salmon cobbles and, with six oars, they were larger than conventional inshore boats. The last two frames were used up on the impressive sculpture standing on a plinth. It was of a salmon lying on its side — as one would have expected — a salmon in its talons.

RAY COLLIER

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE failure of David Ashby's libel action may have caused astonishment in court, but it is no surprise to those of us familiar with the medical condition known as Harvey Proctor Syndrome. For Mr Ashby put money into Cottonrose Ltd, Mr Proctor's bespoke shirt business — and from the moment he signed the cheque, he was doomed. Other investors included Michael Bichard, Neil Hamilton, Michael Brown, Tristan Garel-Jones, Richard Shepherd, Sir Neil Thorne, Tim Yeo, and the noble Lord Archer. Thus far, then, the Cottonrose tally stands as follows: one lost parliamentary seat; one lost constituency; one lost voluntary and three enforced resignations from the Government; one lost whip; two heavy losses in Lloyd's; two gay sex scandals; one £400,000 legal bill; one political ambition curdling share deal; and one near fatal heart attack. Is there any way Mr Proctor might be persuaded to make shirts for the Michaels, Wimmer and Howard, the Cypriot wine-warmer Taki George, and the entire Arsenal football team?

FROM Arsenal, we make the short journey to Tottenham, whose gravitas-ridden MP Bernie Grant has been customising the House of Commons Christmas card. The scene shows a group of choirboys singing under a tree. Out of the mouths of two boys at the rear, dear old Bernie has drawn a cartoon bubble, with the caption: "I'm black, and I'm stuck at the back."

WHENEVER the suggestion is made that it is sacrificing quality in the quest to maximise profits, the kluckers of the ITV network become sorely entangled. And rightly so. Take the internal letter to staff from Meridian, the franchise holder for the South-east, about its news coverage over the festive period. There are five days, it says, on which it will provide absolutely no news service at all — but don't imagine from this that the company is neglecting its duties. "Staff are on call," says the letter, "but it must be stressed the incident or disaster must involve multiple death or injury, and be of a scale warranting news coverage." As to exactly how many "multiple" means — five, perhaps? Lucky seven? — before the company will feel obliged to send out a camera crew on triple time, the letter does not make it clear.

PRESS release has arrived from the TUC. It concerns the long-term unemployed on the Isles of Scilly, who, TUC research reveals, now make up 4.7 per cent of the total Scillies jobs. The document quotes General Secretary John Monks, who says: "Unfortunately the Chancellor had nothing in his Budget for the long-term unemployed in Isles of Scilly." Scandalous. When I speak to the press office about the release, a raised voice can be heard in the background. "It's not going out," says the voice. "It's not going out." Perhaps this has something to do with the figure quoted in the headline, which reads: "Two in Isles of Scilly spend second Xmas on dole."

TOUCHING news from war-ravaged Tuzla. According to the LA Times, young women there hope that the continuing military attack will bring them American boyfriends. "Our guys have come back from war without arms, without legs," said Bakira Kovacic, a 25-year-old waitress. "Some girls expect the Americans will look better."

YULETIDE bonhomie continues to mellow the fey Glaswegian editor of "Independent". In today's instalment of the Wit and Wisdom of Gentleman Charlie, we find ourselves in the morning-leader-writer's conference. Gentleman Charlie: "This newspaper will never, never support the legalisation of ecstasy." Leader-writer: "But it would be interesting to discuss it." GC: "Where? In the dole queue?"



Why Major may opt for merciful release

Commentary

Hugo Young

IT IS a vulgar error to think that a government can't survive a country's disintegrating. In Italy it happens all the time. Italy is the living reminder that government is an overrated necessity in the scheme of things, even when bribery is the essence of its lubrication. The economy moves on faster than in many a governed country, including this one. Bread and circuses abound without reference to collapses at the centre.

It's almost as foolish to believe that a disintegrating government cannot, in fact, govern. The Major Government continues to do a good deal of governing. Not only do the limousines glide to the door, but their occupants administer the smack of power. The Transport Secretary goes on fixing rail privatisation. The National Heritage Secretary settles the lottery. The Education Secretary decides schools need less frequent inspection. The Agriculture

Minister trots off to Brussels. The Home Secretary mopes at injustice to asylum-seekers. The show stays on the road.

Since so little of what government does depends on putting its parliamentary majority to the test, this may continue for some time. Legislation has almost as little to do with governing as the European fisheries policy has to do with Parliament. As Lord Bannock, gamekeeper turned poacher, showed on this page yesterday, the privatisation of government ethics, a moral system developed through a century of civil service recruitment by public agency, can proceed on the basis of a single, undiscussable parliamentary answer and total concealment from the second chamber. So exiguous is the upcoming programme that the most blatant proofs of the Government's impotence needn't appear all that often.

Besides, majorities can be scraped together. The Ulster Unionists will be carefully watched. Might they be tempted to break ranks and show how important they are, rather than await passively an era of Labour government when they're unlikely to count at all? Sir Patrick Mayhew, our very own Paddy, will keep them under his wing. Can't other debits be similarly minimised? The

Times has told us what's going to happen to keep the unlabelled David Ashby MP out of bankruptcy and therefore safely available in the divisional lobbies. "There was immediate confidence that the party's grandees would be able to call on prosperous contacts for help," it reported yesterday.

The Times is impressed by grandees. "Tory grandees die at 92" was the only headline it thought fit to print over news of the death in 1986 of Harold Macmillan, the most eminent living ex-prime minister. The name itself no longer counted. But grandees themselves are almost as outlived as Macmillan. Who can we nominate today? Sir Marcus Fox? And where are these "prosperous contacts"? At Glaxo Wellcome perhaps, or Reckitt & Coleman, or one of the scores of other firms that have cut or stopped funding to the party.

Such faith is touching. But benefactors depend on a mix of confidence and obligation. The household gods must be worth worshipping, the duty to obey them seasoned with some conviction that their writ still runs. This fragile skein of loyalty is torn asunder if disbelief cuts too deep. It now cuts deeper, for Tories, that it has ever done. No Conservative government this century has been picked in so much certainty, among members and supporters

alike, that it cannot win again.

You could see this in Tuesday's debate and vote on the fish quotas. Sunk by the party, MPs are taking to their private life-boats, searching for electoral refuge among constituents who they hope might be persuaded that they, if not the Government, are putting the people first. This tendency will extend beyond Yarmouth and Lowestoft, beyond the issue of fish and even of Europe. For disintegration feeds on itself. It doesn't take a negative vote of confidence to establish that Conservatives' confidence in themselves has already vanished.

This has little to do with the leader. It approaches the fatal stage of being part of the order of things, beyond reach of a great act of leading. Mr Major tried that one in the summer. It was supposed to reverse the downward slide, and for a while it looked as though it did so. Major

His patience and endurance, whether in Ireland or Europe, are public goods

remains the best leader the party has got. His patience and endurance, whether in Ireland or Europe, are public goods. But historic inevitability has him in its grip: a determinist verdict I would eschew, were it not for the ministers and backbenchers who have renounced Micawberism, and barely even pretend that something might turn up.

What is left? Only, perhaps, the dirty politics of desperate men. That would be the natural instinct of a party that

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS 9

Bit by bit the gay stigma subsides



Chris Smith

ISENSED there was something historic about the moment in court last week when Richard Hartley QC, opening his case for the Sunday Times, said that it was not defamatory to say that someone is homosexual in this day and age. The mere fact that an eminent barrister could advance such an argument and be taken seriously does demonstrate that there has been substantial progress in the social acceptance of different sexuality in recent years. But was he right?

In plain moral terms, of course he was. Simply because someone has a different sexuality and happens to be gay or lesbian, this does not in any respect whatsoever make them less valid or less worthy as citizens of their country. They can do a job, just as well as anyone else. They can write and sing and organise and advocate and make machines just as adroitly. They can show commitment and love and trust in relationships, just as others do. There should be no pejorative stigma attached to the fact of being gay. Where someone is gay, it should be treated just as a plain fact of life. It should be neither defamatory nor encomiastic to say that they are.

Michael Barrymore can declare his sexuality and go on to win awards. His audience still loves him. A leading rabbi and even a bishop can tell us they're gay, and earn respect for doing so. Our finest Shakespearean actor comes out, is knighted, and has tea at Downing Street.

Elton John can sell a million records one moment and camp it up on the stage at the Albert Hall the next. And alongside the coming-out of the stars and the prominent celebrities, there are hundreds of thousands of ordinary men and women, who by telling friends and families and neighbours and colleagues that they are gay, help, bit by bit, to remove any notion of stigma or prejudice. The fact that this is happening, I believe, shows that the mood is changing.

Yet some of the tabloids still fulminate (some, indeed, from the same stable as Mr Hartley's client). Pejorative attacks take place on people simply because they are gay. Stereotypes become the subject of poor humour. And there is actual, practical discrimination at work to back it all up. The law discriminates: in the age of consent, the

position of lesbians and gays in the armed services, and the absence of any legal protection. Administrative practice discriminates, in the workplace, in immigration decisions, or in custody cases. And some of our most hallowed institutions continue to ignore the basic principles of the moving public mood.

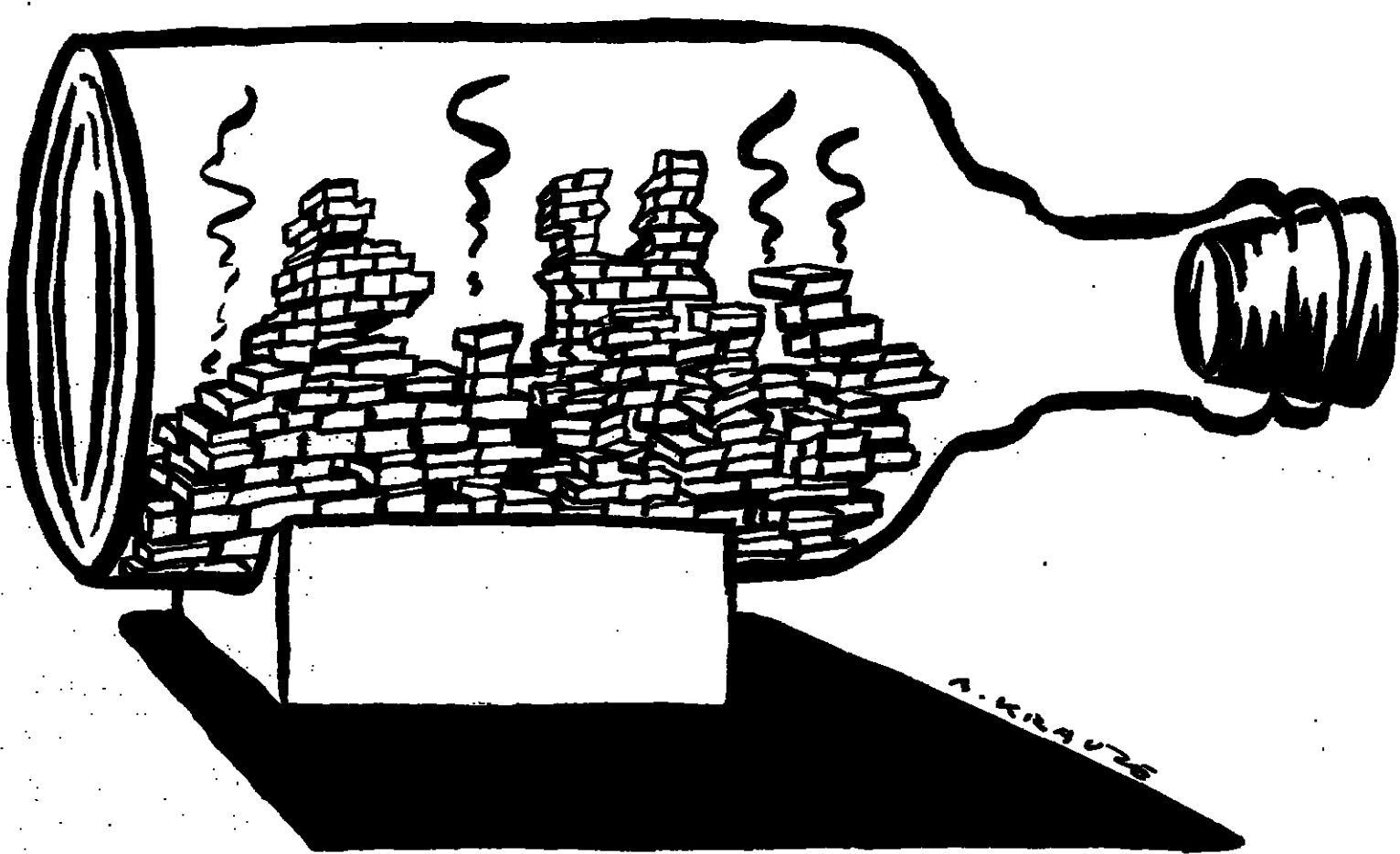
The Church of England still dithers about whether to welcome gay people into the ministry, or shun them. Supporters of staff at Buckingham Palace are forced to demonstrate outside because they are not allowed to bring their same-sex partners to the Christmas party. It is diminishing painfully slowly, but that doesn't mean it has simply disappeared of its own accord. Herein lies the heart of the problem. In fairness and justice, there is nothing whatsoever to be ashamed of about being gay. But so long as the screaming "pofter" headlines appear, so long as employers and insurance companies and others discriminate, being gay has the potential to attract adverse comment. There is no intrinsic shame, but embarrassment can be caused by the reaction of others.

There is a crucial difference, however, in whether you make your own decision, in your own way and about your sexuality, or whether you suddenly find it is others who tell the world. This is one of the reasons why I so profoundly disagree with the tactic of "outing" the rich and famous, however tempting it may be to expose hypocrisy.

So much more is gained by one person deciding voluntarily to speak about themselves than a hundred who are forced or coerced into the limelight. I know that when I "came out" 11 years ago, the letters that meant most to me were the ones that said "thank you, it's made it easier for me". If those of us in the public eye can give a greater degree of self-confidence and sense of self-worth to lesbians and gays up and down the country, then much will have been achieved.

I can entirely understand why someone might think that the comment that they are gay is still defamatory. I wish it weren't so. And the way to make it cease to be so is for us all to have the courage to turn round and say, robustly, that different sexuality makes no difference. Mr Hartley would be proved right. Some of his clients might disappear as a result. Partners would be able to go to the Buckingham Palace Christmas party. Gay clergy would have a great weight lifted. There might even be one or two more openly gay politicians. And we would be living in a better, happier and more decent society as a result.

Chris Smith MP is Shadow National Heritage spokesperson



Farewell, Bosnia

For the UN, the war is over. Ian Traynor sums up the humiliation and failures of what will probably be its last 'peacekeeping mission'

IN THE sprawling United Nations headquarters on Mica Street in central Zagreb, Yasuaki Akashi's General Secretariat is still standing. At a cost of tens of thousands of pounds, the Japanese former UN chief in former Yugoslavia had the mock-Corinthian columns and vaulted walkway erected to shelter him from the elements during the 10-year stretch between the limousine and his office entrance.

The hapless Akashi is long gone. Yesterday the UN went too, its Zagreb nerve-centre yielding to the influx of Nato officers charged with enforcing the Bosnian peace. The permanence and institutional power which are suggested by the pompous columns, incongruously attached to the workaday architecture of what was once a Yugoslav army cadets' training school, have proven illusory. The UN has gone. And with it, the hope of a bright new future for UN peacekeeping in the post-cold-war world.

As the white vehicles and the pale blue berets yesterday gave way to the camouflage and gung-ho of Nato shock troops, the UN was left to ponder the lessons of a bitter three-and-a-half years in the Balkans.

A bright dawn morning in the summer of 1992 and the promise of the UN mission was writ large in the youthful faces of the Canadian soldiers who rolled into Sarajevo to

feed and protect a bewildered populace. They parked themselves in the centre of the besieged city, tried up him and eggs for breakfast atop their huge white armoured vehicles, and trained their heavy machine guns on the Serbs occupying the encircling hills.

The sense of relief and gratitude was palpable in a European capital unable to comprehend the terror to which it was being subjected. Salvation was surely at hand. The international powers had decided to halt the carnage. The sunny young Canadians embodied that will.

The early promise faded quickly, turning to rancour and impotence, whether wilful or not, demoralising not just for the suffering Bosnians, and for outside interventionists baying for tough action, but also for many of the officers and soldiers serving in the UN "Protection Force". 107 of whom have been killed. It was the biggest, most expensive "peacekeeping" foray ever undertaken by the UN — some 40,000 troops in former Yugoslavia costing around £3 million a day. A costly failure? By the end of 1992, the verdict was clear to the commanding officer in Sarajevo, General Razak.

Relief convoys were routinely held up for days over some random bureaucratic ruse. If the UN banned air transport over Bosnia, General Ratko Mladic of the Serbs would fly over for talks with UN officers in his helicopter. If a token Nato air strike took place, hundreds of soldiers were taken hostage, tied to bridges, and put on television. The UN found itself the effective agent of the Serb siege of Sarajevo, for a long time controlling access to the city and patrolling the airport to keep Bosnians from leaving. At a Serb checkpoint on the airport road, UN troops ignored their own rules by opening an armoured car for Serb inspection. The Serbs then murdered a deputy prime minister of Bosnia.

The UN response was to issue more empty outraged threats. The only casualty was the organisation's and the mission's credibility.

AT THE core of the UN's dilemma were two issues — one of the mandate and one of morality. For the first time ever, it was supposed to be keeping the peace in the midst of a raging war — a tall order, an impossible mandate. And to attempt to keep the peace it had to profess to be "neutral", not to take sides in what until last summer was a one-sided war. That meant that thousands of young soldiers were condemned to be spectators at the slaughter, shamed by their own impotence, contemptuous of the political power games that kept them from trying to make a difference.

Bosnia, constantly waved the big stick of Nato bombers, enraging the British and the French with vulnerable troops on the ground and sparking an enduring row with the UN bigwigs who could not conduct a "neutral" mission on the ground while Nato took sides in the air.

The result of this was another debilitating recipe for paralysis, with a clumsy dual-key command-and-control mechanism. In which Nato responded to the latest outrage by clamouring for action and UN politicians in Zagreb and New York sought to stall and sabotage the Nato role.

Akashi in Zagreb and his bosses in New York were made to carry the can for repeated debacles when, in fact, the Americans did not want to get involved and no one else was willing to assume the mantle of leadership. But through its control of much of the decision-taking, the mediation effort, the flow of information, the parameters of the military personnel, the UN itself was an independent and powerful factor in the Bosnian tragedy.

Now that the Americans are substantially engaged, the UN has been superseded and Nato generals can admire the Greek folly in Zagreb or have it ripped down.

Much hinges still on what happens next in Bosnia. The success or failure of the peace enforcement mission may go a long way to determining the future and survival of the western military alliance.

For the UN, Bosnia has been a chastening and defining experience. In all likelihood, the organisation will never again embark on such a peacekeeping mission, such is the mark of the UN's failure. The UN's hopes for keeping the peace after the cold war have been buried in the bloodied fields and hills of Bosnia.

A pager in a Swatch — with no connection fee and no monthly charges.

Swatch The Beep is a Swatch watch with a built-in pager. It lets you keep in touch around the clock with no connection fee and no monthly charges*. In fact, once you've bought The Beep there's nothing more to pay for the rest of time.

Messages are sent to Swatch The Beep via BT's Easyreach Service by simply dialling a numeric code on any TouchTone™ phone.

Swatch The Beep is available at: BT Shops, The Carphone Warehouse, Peoples Phone, The Link, Swatch Store (Oxford Street, London), House of Fraser and selected branches of Dixons and Currys.

Or to order direct
Freefone 0800 313000
Now only £99.99
(excl. £119.99)

*Calls to Swatch The Beep are charged at 25p per call. Calls from payphones, mobiles and non-45 networks are charged at prevailing rates. Excluding holidays.

swatch theBeep BT

10 OBITUARIES

Captain General Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado

Quixotic battle for democracy

IN 1931, a frail, elderly man tried to push back a group of civil guards forcing their way into the Spanish parliament in an attempted coup d'état that threatened to destroy the country's young democracy. He was General Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, deputy premier with responsibility for military affairs, who has died in a car crash aged 83.

The courage of Gutiérrez Mellado as he leaped forward and tussled with the gun-toting intruders, while fellow parliamentarians covered beneath their seats, were clearly visible on television and is the image that most Spaniards will remember of him.

No other military man contributed more to Spain's peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy. Early on in that process, he was charged with taming the military, reforming their structures and subjecting them to civil authority. His efforts gained him the enmity and abuse of hardline colleagues, who realised their days of influence were over.

Gutiérrez Mellado was not entirely successful — as the attempted coup d'état and other planned uprisings showed — but the task was well nigh impossible. Nonetheless, he was rewarded with King Juan Carlos's affection and gratitude, and by the respect of politicians, from both left and right. For the past 10 years he had devoted himself to a foundation he created to fight drug abuse; indeed, he was en route to Barcelona to deliver a lecture to students on "society and corruption" when his car skidded on ice.

Gutiérrez Mellado was born

in Madrid and orphaned at the age of eight, though he was able to continue his studies thanks to the generosity of family friends. At 21, he graduated top of his class from the military academy at Saragossa, then run by General Franco, and began a distinguished career, concentrating on military intelligence.

During the civil war he set up nationalist intelligence networks in Republican-controlled areas on behalf of Franco. He subsequently said his chief concern was to ensure such a conflict never took place again. "My great worry was that brothers might once more begin to spill each other's blood and I fought against that long before I joined the government."

Gutiérrez Mellado gained experience of international affairs from 1946 to 1948, when he was appointed as Spain's assistant military attaché in Brussels. He served several times at army headquarters and was promoted to the rank of general in 1970. In 1975 he became military governor of Ceuta, the Spanish province in Morocco.

THE following year, when he became Captain General of the VII Military Region, Gutiérrez Mellado delivered a telling speech. "We must never forget that the army's task is not to rule but to serve, and that it must be subservient to the government of the nation," he said.

Later that year, Adolfo Suárez, the young prime minister appointed by King Juan Carlos to turn Spain into a democracy, chose Gutiérrez Mellado as his deputy. He was charged with merging

the three services into a combined defence ministry and persuading internal and external forces. His task was complicated by the wave of terrorist attacks, the work of the Basque separatist organisation ETA, which centred on military targets.

Among the most delicate developments faced by the new democracy was the legalisation of the Spanish Communist Party.

"During the transition he suffered an absolute Calvary defending democracy and confronting a series of military chiefs who had no understanding of what was happening and were totally hostile to the process," said Santiago Carrillo, then leader of the Communists. "He had to tread the most difficult and dangerous of lines and risked his life so doing."

Gutiérrez Mellado retired in 1981 but became a permanent member of the council of state in 1984. He received many decorations, both Spanish and foreign, and in 1984 was given the ultimate accolade of being appointed Captain General of the army, a status shared only by King Juan Carlos himself, who wept at his funeral.

Austere and indefatigably hard-working, he was a private man who described himself as "closer to Don Quixote than to Sancho Panza." He is survived by his wife, Carmen Blasco, and their four children.

Adela Gooch

Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, soldier and politician, born April 30, 1912; died December 15, 1995



Gutiérrez Mellado... 'the army's task is not to rule but to serve'

The Guardian Thursday December 21 1995

Lord Jacques of Portsea Island

Fighting for co-operation

LORD JACQUES, who has died aged 90, was a House of Lords Labour whip and employment spokesman, and a Lords deputy speaker — but most of all, an outstanding retailer. Known as JJ in the Co-operative movement, his life was an inspiring journey.

John worked in the Northumbrian coalfield in the first world war's aftermath but after studying co-operative law became, at 21, the Co-operative societies' youngest general manager before taking a post as a Co-operative College tutor. He won his reputation with accountancy and book-keeping textbooks. During the second world war he moved to Plymouth and then Portsmouth, ending his full-time employment in 1965 as the Portsea Island Co-operative Society's chief executive officer.

Whilst inspiring Portsea he was an exceptional committee man and eventually chairman of the Co-operative Union's central executive. In 1956 the Co-operative movement appointed a commission, led by Labour leader Hugh Gaitskill, to plan for the future as competition intensified. In 1958 it recommended that more than 700 Co-ops should be reduced to 25. John spent 10 years cajoling proud local Co-operatives to amalgamate. He was known that commercial sense would not easily prevail. That no Co-op was ever bankrupted was a tribute to his skills.

In 1961 he received the movement's highest honour, election as president of its annual meeting. John's 30-minute address, delivered without notes was a tour de force. Harold Wilson — Labour's fraternal delegate —

told me that he marked him down then as someone to serve a Labour administration and in 1968 John entered the House of Lords, taking to the house like a duck to water. As a whip, his experience was highly effective, as an employment spokesman he worked alongside Secretary of State, Michael Foot who enlisted his skill.

He was the president of the College for the Distributive Trades, which acknowledged his drive as well as the success of his beloved Portsea Island Co-op (Pimco), the best tribute to his life's work. He was loved by his Co-operative friends but at Westminster too. He took his title, Portsea Island, out of respect for the community who he had served in business and as a JP for 25 years. He leaves a widow Violet whom he married when his first wife Connie died — two sons and a daughter.

Lord Graham of Edmonton

John Henry Jacques, Co-operative retailer, born January 11, 1905; died December 20, 1995



Jacques: inspiring journey

Norman Thurston

A little Wight music

ONE NIGHT in 1990, Norman Thurston, who has died aged 74, was having a drink with Lady Barbirolli. She had just narrated Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf with the Isle of Wight Symphony Orchestra — of which she was president and he was administrator. Lady Barbirolli is also the former professional oboist Evelyn Rothwell. That night, they conceived the idea for what became the biennial Isle of Wight International Oboe Competition.

While piano and violin competitions abound, very few events propagate this most expressive of instruments. Thurston enthusiastically launched and administered the venture while its distinguished jury was chaired by Lady Barbirolli. The first competition took place in



Thurston: oboe supporter

September 1993 and the second followed in May of this year.

Norman Thurston was consumed by music from the age of six. He played the violin and viola, ultimately to a professional standard, and was selected for the London

Junior Symphony Orchestra. During the second world war he was an army officer in India and Burma and afterwards pursued a 43-year career with Customs and Excise. Meanwhile, he involved himself in north-east London's musical life, playing in a string quartet, founding the Aurelian Ensemble in Essex, coaching young musicians, and acting as manager and principal viola for the Forest Philharmonic, one of the capital's foremost amateur orchestras.

Thurston moved to the Isle of Wight in 1983 after his retirement and became a founder member of the island's symphony orchestra in 1984, and its administrator the following year. By 1990 the orchestra was acknowledged by the Arts Council as the best non-professional or-

chestra in southern England. He was a great believer in harnessing the talents of volunteers alongside professionals. It was his tenacious lobbying of local authorities and sponsors for funding to employ the best section leaders, conductors and soloists, which helped to raise the orchestra's standards. These skills and contacts proved invaluable when setting up the oboe competition. His immaculate administration left competitors, jurors and the audience free to enjoy the proceedings.

Thurston's influence penetrated the island's musical life. Until recently he was still teaching string players, was a music representative for the Isle of Wight Council for the Arts and a member of the executive of the southern region of the National Federation of Music Societies. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Tim Bullamore

Norman Ewart Thurston, musician, born April 15, 1921; died October 2, 1995

Derick Emmison

History's man

FREDERICK Emmison, who has died aged 88, was a local historian and the pioneer of local archive officers. He was a star pupil at Bedford Modern School, but family circumstances prevented him taking up a Cambridge place, so, in 1925, he became Bedfordshire's first clerk of the records — and soon established a reputation as an exceptionally able and indefatigable collector of historic documents for the county.

In 1933, he moved to Chimsford to become the Essex County Council's first county archivist, where he encouraged the depositing, safe-keeping and cataloguing of a huge range of records. Like the county, he was concerned about preservation and access to modern records and the ancient archives of the Court of Quarter Sessions. Emmison also brought within his scope documents handed

over by the British Record Association and the Master of the Rolls, wills, parochial registers, maps, news cuttings and photographs drawn from stately homes, solicitors' offices and local organisations. He worked hard to produce the Essex Record Office guides and other publications to attract scholars and he encouraged schoolchildren to visit the search room and study the documents for themselves. His aspirations were realised in a great expansion of activity during the postwar era, and no fewer than nine of his staff became county archivists themselves at other centres.

Emmison became a historian in his own right. His publications included Tudor Secretary: Sir William Petre at Court and At Home, Archives and Local History: five volumes on Elizabethan life, and many other works. During a long retirement, he

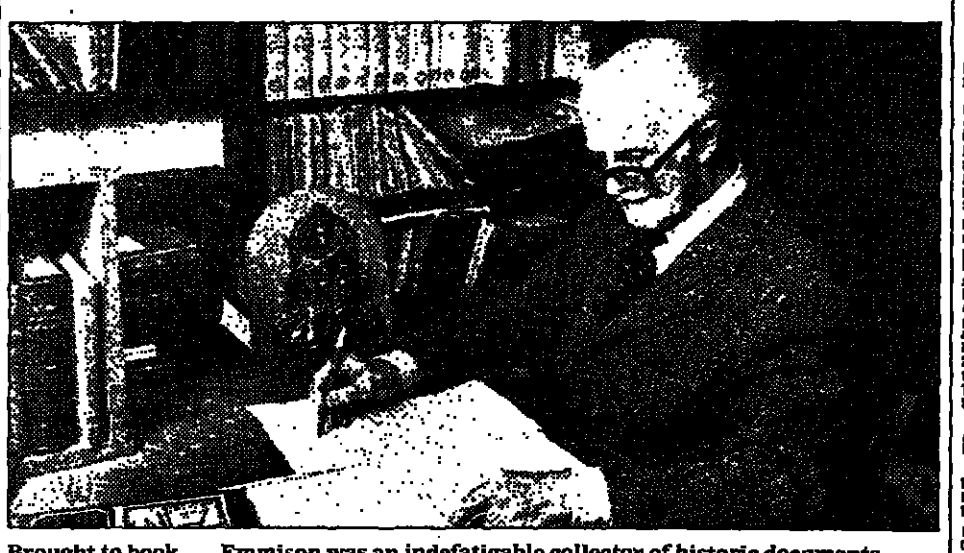
edited a 12-volume series of Elizabethan Essex Wills. He tirelessly encouraged the study of history in Essex and was active in many organisations.

Every locality is a mirror of the world, said the Hertfordshire historian, Reginald Hine. Derick Emmison was not always easy to work with, and sometimes offended fellow workers in the same field. Yet, however, have done more during the past 70 years for the study of local history in Britain.

He married Margaret Langwill, who also trained as an archivist and assisted him. They had two children, Martin and Lesley, and there are two grandchildren.

Stan Newens

Frederick George Emmison (Derick Emmison), archivist and historian, born May 28, 1907; died November 9, 1995



Brought to book... Emmison was an indefatigable collector of historic documents

Alan Champion

Finding a proper job for the Pilgrim master

IN 1947, Alan Champion, who has died aged 78, took up the post of warden of Pilgrim College in Boston, Lincolnshire. He intended to stay there just as long as it took to get a proper job. But as war-torn and resident tutor, he remained for more than three decades. And, with his wife Winifred, he transformed Pilgrim and the town's cultural life. Between 1960 and 1965 he was the main mover when a ruined 18th-century Friary near the beautiful 18th-century Fyde House — the home of the college — was restored and turned into Blackfriars Theatre and Arts Centre.

In 1971, when the Open University began, Pilgrim became the local centre for a flourishing community of OU students. Alan became one of the infant institution's most enthusiastic and committed tutors — often saying it was

just what he'd been waiting for. He continued as an arts tutor long into his retirement.

He was also closely involved, through the Boston Preservation Trust, in the conversion of a riverside warehouse, which opened as the Boston Music Centre in 1978.

When Alan arrived at the college he was fresh from wartime service, which had ended with him as a lieutenant-colonel commanding the Middle East Formation College in Haifa. Earlier, he had been at Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he had coxed the winning crew in the 1940 university boat race.

As well as the college, he was a senior lecturer in education at Nottingham University. I well recall my first tutorial class at Pilgrim College in the mid-sixties. The five students present, in-

cluded two relatives and a close friend. Alan came in. The young tutor expressed some doubt on whether the course would run. "No sense," Alan said, "there's a strong foundation here. We'll get this one off the ground." And he did.

He had the kind of genius that expressed itself in an ability to stimulate and focus the work of others, to build up a network of friendship and they're going to kill me. I don't know why. They say I'm an accomplice of the Rwanda Patriotic Front. That's why I'm going to die, and here's my testament.

Thomas wrote his will, and handed it over. One of the soldiers said, "OK, let's finish this," and stood back, readying his rifle. "I didn't look," Thomas recalled when he told me of the incident. "I really believed he would shoot me. Then another vehicle came up, and suddenly I saw a major with his foot up on the bunker, and he said, 'Thomas? When he called me, I came out of a sort of dream.'"

From After The Genocide by Philip Gourevitch in the New Yorker. A year after the massacres, Gourevitch paints a pessimistic picture of Rwanda's future. Former Hutu ruling groups in neighbouring Zaire await the fall of the minority Tutsi regime, threatened by a return of last year's violence.

Dead days THOMAS walked up the hill, past the deserted American Embassy and along the Boulevard de la Révolution. At the corner in front of the Soras Insurance Building, across from the Ministry of Defence, there was a bunker, with soldiers around it. The soldiers scolded Thomas for describing their activities in his reports to the international media. He was ordered to sit down in the street. When he refused, the soldiers beat him. They beat him hard and slapped him repeatedly, shouting insults and questions. Then someone kicked him in the stomach, and he sat down on the street. "OK, Thomas," one of the men said. "Write a letter to your wife and say what you like, because you're going to die."

Gordon Lammie

Alan Champion, educator, born May 28, 1917; died October 30, 1995

Jackdaw



More Delia

DELIA SMITH Delia's Second Week in February Collection (BBC Books, £200, no discounts). A new collection of recipes designed to plug an important gap in the bookshelves. DOUG MCSPLATTER, VC I Killed Seven In One Blow (Mc-Tee Publishing, £5.99). SAS Sergeant Doug McSpatter tells the gripping story of a top-secret mission to eliminate seven Iraqi flies. PRIVATE X Take Them Off At The Knees, Bravo! (Mc As Well Publishing, £5.99). Private X tells the bitter truth behind Operation

Fly Spray, which left 152 soldiers injured and 19 dead, as Corporal McSpatter led his troops in a crazed mission to eliminate seven dipterous insects from the divisional pantry.

EMMA TENNANT Big Dorrit (Globe Books, £16.99). This sequel to Little Dorrit finds Amy unable to achieve sexual satisfaction with her new husband, Arthur Clennam. After a lesbian affair with Arthur's half paralysed mother she elopes with Merdle, the failed financier who turns out to have faked his suicide and escaped to Australia with his vast fortune.

FREDERICK MACMILLAN et al In Defence Of The Net Book Agreement (Reddy Reminders, £1.99 non-net). A reprint, in easy reference form, of the speeches and articles that helped to support the most successful and popular price-fixing agreement of all time.

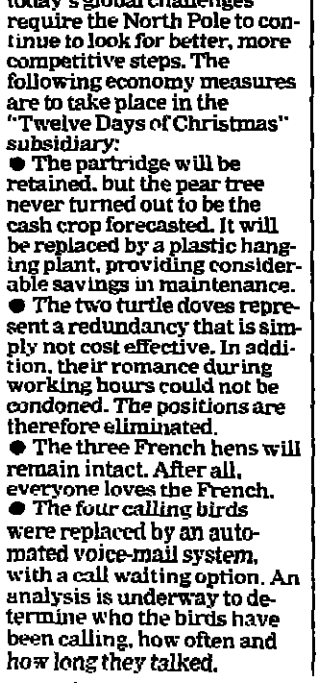
ARIOUS Penguin Sixty Ones (Penguin, £0.61). A new format to celebrate another landmark

in Penguin's history. Lovingly abridged by world-famous sub-editors and repackaged by the most economical printers money can buy.

The Bookshelf takes a light-hearted look at the publishing delights in store for next year.

Days off ASA further restructuring, today's global challenges require the North Pole to continue to look for better, more competitive steps. The following economy measures are to take place in the "Twelve Days of Christmas" subsidiary: ● The partridge will be retained, but the pear tree never turned out to be the cash crop forecasted. It will be replaced by a plastic hanging plant, providing considerable savings in maintenance. ● The two turtle doves represent a redundancy that is simply not cost effective. In addition, their romance during working hours could not be condoned. The positions are therefore eliminated. ● The three French hens will remain intact. After all, everyone loves the French. ● The four calling birds were replaced by an automated voice-mail system, with a call waiting option. An analysis is underway to determine who the birds have been calling, how often and how long they talked.

Genocide... New Yorker



● The five golden rings have been put on hold. Maintaining a portfolio based on one commodity could have negative implications for institutional investors. Diversification into other precious metals as well as a mix of T-Bills and high technology stocks appears to be in order. ● The six geese-a-laying constitute a luxury which can no longer be afforded. It has long been felt that the production rate of one egg per goose per day is an example of the decline in productivity. Three geese will be let go, and an upgrading in the selection procedure by personnel will assure management that from now on every goose it gets will be a good one. ● The seven swans-a-swimming is obviously a number chosen in better times. The function is primarily decorative. Mechanical swans are on order. The current swans will be retained to learn some new strokes and therefore enhance their outplacement. ● As you know, the eight maids-a-milking concept has been under heavy scrutiny, by the EEOC. A male/female balance in the workforce is being sought. The more militant maids consider this a dead-end job with no upward mobility. Automation of the process may permit the maids to try a mending, a mentoring or a milking. ● Nine ladies dancing has always been an odd number. This function will be phased out as these individuals grow older and can no longer do the steps.

● Ten Lords-a-leaping is overkill. The high cost of Lords plus the expense of international air travel prompted the compensation committee to suggest replacing this group with 10 out-of-work congressmen. While leaping ability may be somewhat sacrificed, the savings are significant because we expect an over-supply of unemployed congressmen this year. ● Eleven drummers drumming is a simple case of the band getting too big. A substitution with a string quartet, a cut-back on new music and no uniforms will drop right down to the bottom line. No room for sentimentality in the hard-nosed Christmas, on the Internet's Thought For The Day mailing list.

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 115 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Death Notices FLETCHER, Professor Charles, CBE FRSC, peacefully at home in London on 15th December, aged 84. Dearly loved husband of 52 years. Buried in Westwood Cemetery. Funeral services at Holy Trinity Church, Clarendon Road, London W14 9NS on Friday 22nd December. Memorial Service at 11.30am on Sunday, December 24th at 12.00pm. No flowers but donations if desired to Lymington Research Trust c/o BILD, The Midwives' Hospital, Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AA.

Birthdays Michelle Evelyn, quarter of a century, happy birthday and lots of love, mum, dad, Lawrence and Holly. All to place your announcement telephone 0171 871 8200

Dan Glaister

صكنا من الامل

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

FinanceGuardian

Forte sells US hotels chain

Ian King

FORTE continued building its defences against Granada's £3.4 billion bid yesterday, selling its Travelodge chain of budget hotels in America for \$175 million (£114 million).

Under the terms of the sale, Forte will retain the rights to the Travelodge name in Britain, Europe, and the rest of the world, except North America.

However, the Council stood aside when Allied Breweries bid for the entire group the following year, and is widely expected to do the same with the present bid.

One little-noticed side effect of the ruling is that the Council is also free under the terms of the ruling to either sell its shares to Granada, or to back a Granada bid.

Meanwhile, Mercury Asset Management, the largest shareholder in both Forte and Granada, denied reports that it had called on Sir Rocco Forte, Forte's chairman and chief executive, to split his roles in return for its support.

progressively increasing its stakes in both Forte and Granada over the last fortnight, has insisted that there is no strategic significance in its recent action.

Notebook

Courting change at the Old Lady



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE most eye-catching of the changes at the Bank of England is almost certainly the departure of supervision director, Brian Quinn.

of other EU countries at the time of their accession to the community which meant drugs could be produced there more cheaply. The deficiencies in patent legislation have now been remedied, but drug companies elsewhere have complained that the protection will not actually be felt until 2002.

One could argue that this particular problem will disappear of its own accord. But the commission needs to tread very warily on issues of trade freedoms within the EU. Since the currency crises of 1992 and 1993, there have been increasing protests from within hard currency countries about the impact of competitive devaluations.

OUR deepest misgivings (Notebook: December 16) about the troubled marriage of RTZ with its Australian associate, CRA, has come to pass. In many ways, the "compromise" deal thrashed out between the mining giant and the Australian government was even worse (in terms of damage inflicted on the merger concept) than Canberra's original list of demands.

THE European Commission is threatening to fine the pharmaceuticals arm of the German chemicals group, Bayer, after allegations that the latter restricted sales of its Adalat heart drug in Spain and France to prevent their re-export to the UK where prices are higher.

Euro tensions

Whatsoever the rights or wrongs of the Adalat imbroglio — Bayer argues that it sells a different variant of the drug in the UK — it is bound to heighten fears about parallel drug exports from the Iberian peninsula after the Commission decision earlier this month not to renew restrictions on drug exports from Spain and Portugal to the rest of the European Union.

The restriction was originally imposed because patent protection in the two countries fell well below that

Soccer boss signs for Threadneedle St Supervisory chief goes in shake-up at Bank

Mark Millner

BRIAN QUINN, the Bank of England director responsible for banking supervision at the time of the Barings' collapse and the closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, is to retire next spring.

replace the industrialist Sir Christopher Hogg and academic businessman, Professor Sir Rowland Smith. Sir John succeeds Sir Rowland at the beginning of March.

Mr Leeson recently began serving a six-and-a-half year prison sentence in Singapore for his part in the Barings' collapse.

Pay-out for BCCI creditors

Mark Millner

CREDITORS of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, which include a number of UK local authorities as well as ordinary depositors, are set to get a 20p in the £ repayment early next year, totalling £2 billion (£1.3 billion).

Chronology of deceit

1972 — Aghe Hassan Abedi establishes BCCI in Luxembourg to avoid feared nationalisation of Pakistan's banks.
1985 — BCCI suffers \$430 million loss on US Treasury options.
1987 — Price Waterhouse appointed worldwide BCCI auditor.
1990 — April: PW alleges false transactions in 1989 accounts.
1991 — March: Bank of England orders PW inquiry. June: PW report evidence of massive fraud. July: Bank of England closes BCCI in Britain in co-ordination with other countries. US Federal Reserve fines BCCI \$200 million for violating banking laws. New York district attorney Indictes Abedi and co-chief executive Sheikh Nasir, alleging \$2 billion fraud.
1992 — January: UK and Luxembourg courts order liquidation. February: Bank of England denies it could have acted sooner. October: Lord Justice Bingham's report finds Bank of England insufficiently alert to fraud.
1993 — October: Luxembourg court rejects \$1.7 billion compensation package from Abu Dhabi, majority shareholder. December: High Court approves \$1.8 billion compensation deal.
1994 — January: Luxembourg court approves deal. April: Former BCCI employees appeal. August: Abedi dies. November: Employees file motion to withdraw appeal. December 20: Luxembourg court approves motion to withdraw, clearing way for settlement.

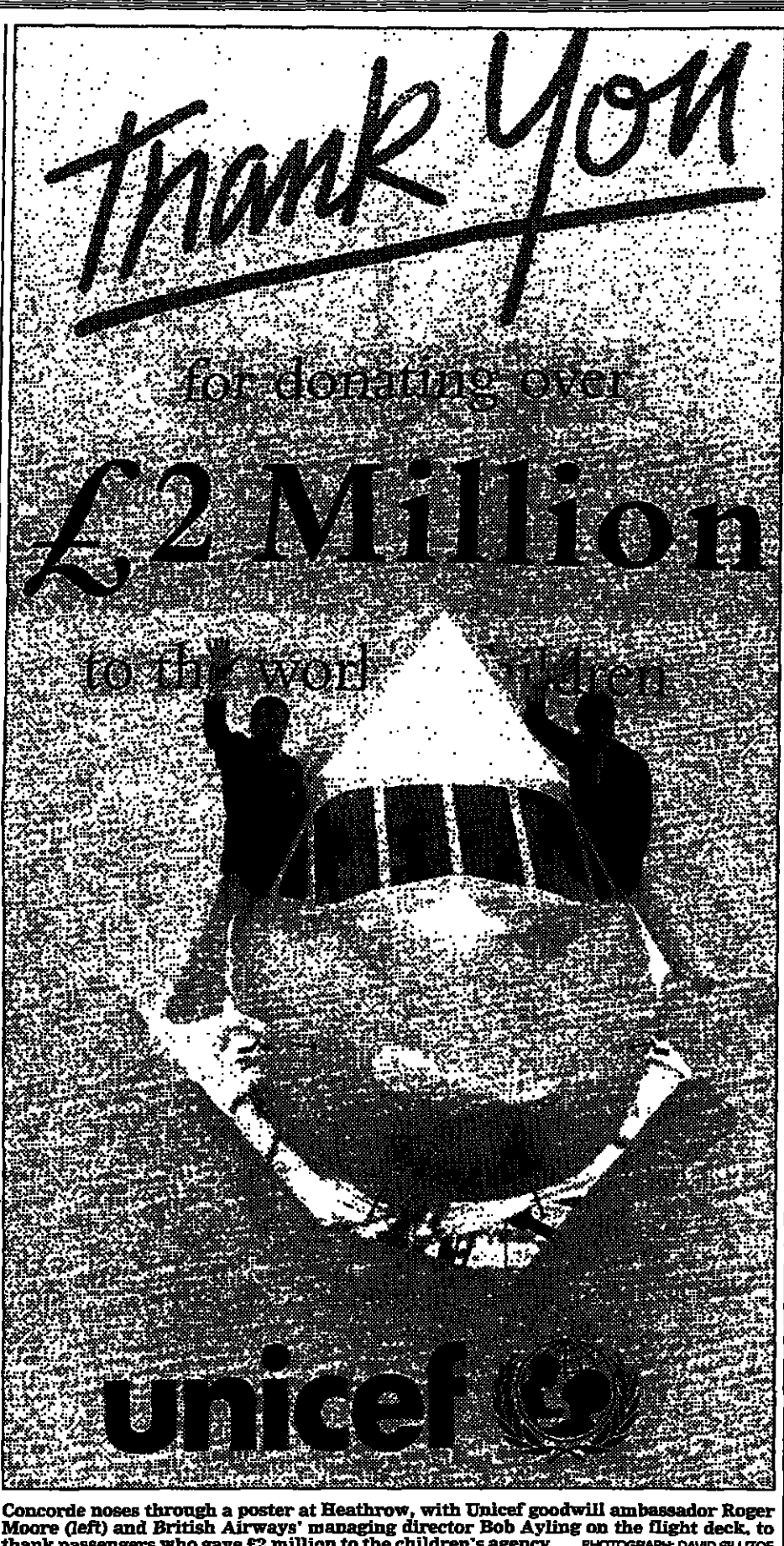
£250m system hampers open market power plan

Simon Beevis
Industrial Editor

GOVERNMENT plans to introduce full competition in the electricity market from April 1998 suffered a setback last night after warnings that an expensive new system for trading power was unlikely to be ready in time.

tion stage" that would allow a phased introduction of a new preferred trading arrangement (PTA).

Coopers & Lybrand — interim programme managers of the Pool — had advised "the likelihood of implementing the PTA in full by April 1, 1998, is, at best, 50 per cent."



Concorde noses through a poster at Heathrow, with Unicef goodwill ambassador Roger Moore (left) and British Airways' managing director Bob Ayling on the flight deck, to thank passengers who gave £2 million to the children's agency. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Tasty Rudolph gets a roasting



Finland's reindeer don't help Santa at Christmas. Their fate is dinner, writes JON HENLEY from Rovaniemi

HE TASTES particularly good roasted, with sautéed potatoes and cranberry sauce. Or the more adventurous may prefer him in a burger, on a bed of lettuce between two slices of rye bread.

deer are business — and times are hard.

Well over half of Finland's 230,000 reindeer are slaughtered every winter, according to figures from the national Reindeer Herders' Association, producing some 3 million kilos of meat with a total market value of over £15 million.

Other markets are already opening up. Finland's chief rabbi recently received requests from New York delicatessens for large quantities of kosher reindeer meat.

First, though, the industry's unwieldy co-operatives — split between traditionalists and entrepreneurial young herders keen to try new products and approaches — have to adapt.

At the moment, all changes have to be approved by the annual reindeer herders' parliament.

Now struggling farmers face a further blow in the shape of EU hygiene guidelines which demand heavy investment by traditional slaughterhouses. With wholesale prices down to 21.70 a pound, the money

Names association warns Lloyd's on excess capacity

Pauline Springett

THE struggling Lloyd's of London insurance market is facing a further decline in profits next year because excess underwriting capacity could force down premium rates, warned the Association of Lloyd's Members yesterday.

The ALM, which represents 9,000 Names, was responding to Lloyd's announcement that the market's 1996 capacity would be £9.85 billion.

While this is slightly lower than this year's figure of £10.1 billion, the performance of Lloyd's has been declining because insurance premiums have been falling steadily.

writers to write rubbish. The Names paid a catastrophic price for that in the 1980s. Let's hope they are not going to pay that price again," said an ALM spokesman, adding that Lloyd's should take greater measures to keep capacity under control.

About 60 per cent of next year's capacity is coming from the traditional unlimited liability Names, with the rest coming from new-style limited liability corporate capital members. The figures show that the proportion of Lloyd's capital provided by its Names is shrinking, although it is not disappearing as swiftly as some market observers had predicted.

Lloyd's chairman David Rowland said: "The figures clearly demonstrate the resilience and confidence of both the traditional membership and the established and new corporate members."

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS			
Australia 2.0160	France 7.36	Italy 2.410	Singapore 2.1350
Austria 15.10	Germany 2.16	Malta 0.5375	South Africa 5.47
Belgium 44.25	Greece 964.00	Netherlands 2.4275	Spain 182.50
Canada 2.05	Hong Kong 11.70	New Zealand 2.3175	Sweden 10.10
Cyprus 0.966	India 53.26	Norway 5.52	Switzerland 1.72
Denmark 6.28	Ireland 0.95	Portugal 227.00	Turkey 54.01
Finland 6.54	Israel 4.72	Saudi Arabia 5.61	USA 1.5050
Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)			

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)

Export peak cuts non-EU trade gap

Sarah Ryle

RECORD exports helped cut Britain's trade deficit with countries outside the European Union by more than half last month, according to official figures published yesterday.

Weakening imports combined with the best overseas sales to produce a deficit of £0.5 billion — the lowest since March this year. But, even with the improvement, this year's overall trade deficit still stands at £7.1 billion, compared to £4.2 billion at the same time last year.

But the Central Statistical Office said yesterday's figures had prompted a revision of its view that the trend of the non-EU trade deficit was upwards.

City analysts had been predicting a deficit of nearly £1 billion following the deterioration in October to £1.2 billion. HSBC's Jonathan Loyes said: "Exports finally appear to be waking up again after stagnating in the first half of the year." But analysts were cautious, with some predicting that the sharp improvement could not be sustained.

UBS's Alex Garrard said: "A revival in export volumes to non-EU countries looks unlikely in view of continued weakness in activity, while rising private sector spending should fuel import volumes over the coming months."

The record exports, including oil and erratic goods which consist of items like aircraft and precious stones, were worth £5.9 billion in November against imports valued at £6.3 billion, down 3 per cent on the previous month.

Half the increase — 9 per cent higher than the October level — was due to the export

of erratics, especially of a warship to Saudi Arabia worth £0.15 billion. And a purchase of one aircraft, a Boeing 777 from the United States by British Airways, helped to tip the value of imports by £0.1 billion.

But the volume of exports excluding oil and erratics, regarded by the authorities as a better guide to the true state of British trade, also rose to record levels and was 5 per cent better than in October.

In the three months to November, regarded as a less volatile measure than the monthly fluctuations, the underlying trade picture, excluding oil and erratics, showed export volumes rising by 4 per cent on the previous three months. Adam Cole, of James Capel, added: "It is the first significant evidence that manufacturers have stopped rebuilding stocks."

This suggested that manufacturers would meet demand from existing stocks rather than through new production in the coming months.

But Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Brothers said non-EU exports appeared to be rising again to most regions after a period of weakness and would help the economy accelerate again during 1996. Board of Trade President Ian Lang said the figures showed Britain's exporters were world leaders in the international market.

Labour's shadow trade and industry secretary, Margaret Beckett, welcomed the improvement in the deficit last month but accused the Government of complacency.

Ms Beckett said: "In his Budget Kenneth Clarke had to revise his estimate of the visible trade deficit for 1996 from the £6.5 billion he predicted a year ago to the £11.5 billion he predicts now."



Images of a fallen whizz-kid... Graham Turner's award-winning picture (above) and photographer Garrige Ho's shot of Leeson's Lager (below)

Leeson passes on probably the most expensive lager in the world

Dan Atkinson

YOU know the name, you know the number: Leeson Lager rolls off the bottling line, its label carrying the name of the fallen trader, and the name of the bank that collapsed.

The animal used in a meeting outside the Bank of England, to protest at the trader's "scapegoat" treatment, formed the subject of Graham Turner's winning entry for the business photography awards, organised by the Lowe Bell Financial public-relations consultancy. It's his second win in a row. Guardian photographer, Sean Smith, was runner-up.

Tagged as the world's costliest beer, Leeson Lager will be distributed as gifts to friends and clients of Leeson's former workmates.

The animal used in a meeting outside the Bank of England, to protest at the trader's "scapegoat" treatment, formed the subject of Graham Turner's winning entry for the business photography awards, organised by the Lowe Bell Financial public-relations consultancy. It's his second win in a row. Guardian photographer, Sean Smith, was runner-up.



Receiving hard kick up the ratings

Outlook '96/ The ITV companies expect to be hit where it hurts over C4 funding. But this is one of many challenges they face in volatile times. **Lisa Buckingham** reports

INDEPENDENT television companies are expected to ask the Government to cut the £373 million a year they pay to the Treasury by some £50 million to compensate for the future loss of contributions from Channel 4.

Under last week's Broadcasting Bill, the Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, will review the funding arrangements so that C4 can keep more of its revenues.

At present, C4 has to pay half of everything it earns above 14 per cent of terrestrial advertising to the ITV companies. This totals about £50 million a year and results in a substantial injection for companies such as Carlton Communications, whose two franchises — Carlton and Central — received almost £20 million this year, roughly equivalent to 16 per cent of the group's broadcasting profits.

In all, C4 will contribute about £300 million to ITV before the 1996 funding change. The prospective loss of this income coincides with the planned launch of the fifth terrestrial channel in just over a year, under the guidance of former LWT boss Greg Dyke, and with the backing of Thames TV's expensive programme library, could hit ITV's core earnings rather than (at least, according to ITV) those of Channel 4.

Quite aside from the competition from satellite operator BSkyB, the independent television companies are understood to have suffered a recent drop in advertising demand. Although they are still predicted to end 1995 about 5 per cent better off, with total revenues of almost £1.6 billion, the dampening of advertising in the last two months is in contrast with the average monthly increases earlier in the year of up to 15 per cent.

This comes at a time when ITV is having to spend more on its autumn programming in an effort to push up its audience ratings.

Mrs Bottomley also plans to relax the cross-media ownership rules and end the ban on combining more than two ITV franchises. These proposals come at a good time. If ITV's attempts to drive forward profits are frustrated, at least a series of takeovers will allow the removal of some of the networks' cost base.

Yorkshire Tyne Tees is the plum target: it has a large audience and an attractive and substantial programme library, including series such as *A Touch of Frost*, *Emmerdale* and the Catherine Cookson dramas. Its chairman, Ward Thomas, has never made a secret of his aware-

ness that the group is likely to lose its independence, probably to Granada or M&L, both of which have a 15 per cent shareholding.

But analysts suggest that once the Broadcasting Bill becomes law, probably half way through next year, Carlton may also be interested in buying Yorkshire, which could cost more than £450 million to secure in an auction. Although Carlton, with an estimated audience share of 9.4 per cent, could have trouble buying Yorkshire which has a 5.9 per cent share.

However, Neil Junor of NatWest Securities says it is not unimaginable that Carlton's Michael Green could take a tilt at Lord Hollick's M&L, although if the socialist

ITV is having to spend more on its latest programme schedule in an effort to push up audience ratings

peer were to believe that for a second he would probably be tempted by the strategic poison pill which ITV could offer. The Welsh station could also attract the attentions of Scottish TV, both of whose major shareholders, Mirror Group and Flextech, are believed to have aspirations in that direction.

If the major ITV companies can settle their differences,

takeovers and the savings from running down the costly network centre could save a total of between £40 million and £50 million a year for Channel 3.

Meanwhile, a semblance of light relief may occur in the spring when the Office of Fair Trading concludes its wide-ranging review of BSkyB. Industry sources suggest that the bi-partisan political support for BSkyB's 40 per cent shareholder, Rupert Murdoch, must become more intense the closer it gets to an election. However, the BBC was given a break with larger than anticipated shares in the digital TV plans, and some kind of restriction on BSkyB's ability to mop up the rights to every decent sport in the country could be to the BBC's advantage.

Elsewhere, companies such as United Newspapers and Pearson, which have suffered recent upsets, may take advantage of the relaxation of cross-media rules with analysts suggesting United might try to hoist its share rating by bidding for something like Capital Radio rather than selling its national newspaper titles.

There is also a suggestion that the costs of taking the first steps in planned national cable TV networks could see the merger of the new media businesses of Mirror Group and the Daily Mail yesterday acquired the Faith News archive, whose assets include nearly 3,000 hours of archive dating from 1896 to 1970.

Tomorrow: The high street

Hanson moves to reduce debt

Roger Cowe

HANSON plans to cut its near-£5 billion debt mountain by raising more than £2 billion (£1.3 billion) from the sale of Cavenham Forest Products, plus the flotation of its Surburban Propane business, it announced yesterday.

The move is part of the conglomerate's attempt to reverse its recent share price fall by cutting the debts accumulated after its acquisition of Eastern Electric, and to focus on four major businesses.

Hanson chief executive Derek Bonham said yesterday: "These disposals are part of our programme to concentrate on fewer, larger activi-

ties." They prompted one analyst to comment: "I think the market will be relieved to see this."

Hanson's shares rose by 4.5p to 188.5p but are still well below the price earlier this year. The shares have collapsed over the past couple of years, since a peak of 231p at the beginning of 1994. This week's price of 184.5p was the lowest for three years.

The group has made a series of disposals in recent years as it tidied up the peripheral bits of the empire built up by Lords Hanson and White in the 1980s. And last month, Mr Bonham said there would be further sales as he aimed to concentrate on chemicals, tobacco, energy and building-related activities.

Cavenham and Surburban Propane are outside these areas, as is the UK vitamin business Seven Seas, which is also expected to be sold shortly.

Cavenham was acquired from Sir James Goldsmith in 1990 in a £1.3 billion swap for the Newmont gold mining operation that came into Hanson as part of Consolidated Goldfields. Last year, sales and profits fell due to a drop in the price of lumber but the operation nevertheless made \$55 million profit on sales of \$355 million.

Surburban Propane was part of the Quantum Chemicals acquisition in 1993. Quantum has been enormously profitable for Hanson as the chemical business cycle has moved upwards since the

purchase, but Surburban Propane is a consumer business which does not fit Hanson's main areas of activity. It also produced lower profits last year as a result of the mild winter which hit gas sales. Profits fell from \$56 million to \$41 million on sales of \$400 million.

The company will be floated on the US stock exchange, although Hanson will keep around 60 per cent of the shares. The flotation, together with a \$425 million debt issue by Surburban Propane, will bring in an estimated \$775 million for Hanson.

Cavenham's tracts of forest will be sold, and Hanson said yesterday that it is already in talks with several potential purchasers. The sale is expected to raise \$1.5 billion.

News in brief

Goldman Sachs makes £880m

PROFITS at Goldman Sachs, the Wall Street investment house, soared to \$1.37 billion (£880 million) this year on the back of the booming stock market and a surge in the number of mergers and acquisitions. While the results were well below the record of \$2.7 billion it set in 1993, they were still the company's third best year and a sharp contrast to 1994. Goldman paid its bankers and traders bonuses that were, on average, 30 per cent higher than in 1994. — *Mark Tran in New York*

Zantac gets US approval

GLAXO Wellcome has received clearance from the US Food and Drug Administration to sell a low-dose version of its Zantac ulcer drug without prescription. Zantac 75 has been on sale in the UK for several months and treats heartburn and indigestion. It will join two other products which have moved from prescription-only sale: Pepsid, sold by Merck and Johnson & Johnson, and SmithKline Beecham's Tagamet. Zantac 75 is expected to challenge for leadership of the \$1 billion US market. — *Roger Cowe*

Moscow proves expensive

MOSCOW prices are now the highest in Europe and the Russian capital now ranks just behind the Japanese cities of Tokyo and Osaka in cost-of-living terms for expatriates, according to a survey from Geneva-based consultancy Corporate Resources. The survey is based on food, alcohol, clothing, transport, sports and leisure, and home entertainment. Tokyo remains the world's most expensive city with an index of 202. — *AP*

Japanese budget revealed

JAPAN'S finance minister Masayoshi Takemura yesterday revealed his "self-contradictory" annual budget proposals for the year starting in April which showed a swelling deficit to be covered by record borrowings of 21,000 billion yen (almost £135 billion). The deficit will raise Japan's total accumulated debt to 96 per cent of gross domestic product, more than in the United States. — *Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo*

German growth in doubt

GERMANY'S highly-respected IFO economics institute yesterday predicted that the country's GDP would expand by just 1.75 per cent next year. Its projection was more pessimistic than the government's own projection of 2 per cent and considerably lower than an August forecast by Germany's six economic institutes of 2.5 per cent. — *AP*

Bank jobs boost

THE Co-operative Bank yesterday announced the setting up of a second 24-hour call centre which will create 450 jobs in Stockport, Greater Manchester. The bank already claims UK market leadership catering for 2 million personal account holders from its initial call centre at Skelmersdale. — *Murray Halsall*

Underside

Dan Atkinson

RITZ and CRA shareholders took their courage in both hands when they voted for their re-marriage yesterday, for in so doing they defied a terrifying-sounding gang of pressure groups under the umbrella of the International Ad Hoc Committee on the RITZ/CRA Merger (HQ in London N1, natch). Forty organisations are affiliated including the International Wages for House-



work Campaign, the Bougainville Interim Government and the Women for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (UK branch). Apparently, Rio-CRA will become "the world's most powerful single mining conglomerate" (true; RITZ is already, in fact), and, er, will go around being horrid to the environment. And indigenous peoples. Don't ever change.

BEAN futures; has beans, more like. Just now, soy-meal contracts are flavour of the month among the cognoscenti of China's derivatives markets. So much so that the authorities have had to clamp down on trading. And maybe the regulators have a point. One day this week, trading in January soy-meal contracts on the Guangdong commodities exchange topped 100,000 lots, representing more than 1 million tons. And the actual supply available for delivery? Er, well... 2,000 tons. Time to get into paper hankie futures, just in case.

THE sale of Her Majesty's Stationery Office is not the only privatisation to be hitting trouble. Privately backed by the (deputy) Prime Minister,

to farm out the work of the Central Office of Information to private-sector public relations types are also faltering. The COI's many functions, including wartime public announcements, and COI personnel are trained at the Easingwold civil defence centre in East Yorkshire. Another of its tasks is to accompany members of the royal family during visits around the country. Somehow, there are doubts as to whether the flamboyant PR (and expensive) men of London Town would really be suitable.

ON THE subject of money, it's good to see Royal Bank of Scotland trimming back at the top. Total directors' pay has fallen this year, from £28 million to just £24 million. But mass austerity has not broken out in the boardroom at St Andrew Square: the fall has been caused by the end of bonus payments to Peter Wood, the Direct Line millionaire whose contract was bought out last year for £13 million.

AS THE end-of-year deadline looms for those key Moscow talks between the Russian authorities and diamond giant De Beers, it seems the

chaps in Hatton Garden have Russia on the brain. Last week, we reported the Russian Princess featured on one of De Beers's corporate Christmas cards; now a splendid gift arrives, courtesy of the gem-men, in the shape of a recording of Mozart and Beethoven. Performed by? The Moscow Symphony Orchestra. Get a grip, fellas.

BURTON chief executive John Hoerner is to become vice chairman of Battersea Dogs Home. No doubt he will put to good use the experience he gained when he made himself responsible for one of the biggest dogs in the country, the aforementioned clothing group.

A CHRISTMAS mystery from Yamachi International in Finsbury Pavement. What is the fifth piece of plant life featured on its multi-lingual "season's greetings" card? The mistletoe, fir, holly and ivy are joined by a strange-looking twig, sharpened at one end. "Japanese spruce," declared Yamachi's spokesman. Challenged further, he admitted he hadn't a clue, but suggested it could be a twig from a pencil tree.

BREITLING
1884



NAVITIMER: ON COURSE AND ON TIME. With time a crucial aspect of air travel, pilots and navigators have long viewed their watch as their basic personal instrument. Even with today's sophisticated navigation satellites and radio beacons, "flight computers" like the NAVITIMER's are still used for routine calculations. A slide rule of this kind is built into NAVITIMER mechanical chronographs. The pilot's sole personal instrument, today's NAVITIMERs are based on a design voted official watch of the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association in 1952. Relentlessly improved since then, NAVITIMERs are totally efficient and fascinating to operate while their good looks remain as unmistakable as ever.

AVAILABLE FROM SELECTED JEWELLERS
THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.
FOR YOUR NEAREST STOCKIST TELEPHONE 0171 637 5167.

BREITLING SA, P.O. Box 1132, SWITZERLAND - 2540 GRENCHEN
Tel: 41 65 / 51 11 31, Fax: 41 65 / 53 10 09

INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

سكوت من الامم

Murdoch swaps Sun for sea, page 13

Rider jumps ship for gold, page 15

Coca-Cola Cup soccer, page 14

TV demands expanded Five Nations, page 15

SportsGuardian

Irish botch Charlton parting

Cynthia Bateman

JACK CHARLTON'S marvellous relationship with the Republic of Ireland looks certain to end in acrimony. The Republic's manager may quit in anger today after Football Association of Ireland officials yesterday appeared to be forcing his hand.

Charlton is due to meet FAI officials this morning to discuss his future. Or so the association thought yesterday. Charlton, however, was not at all sure he was even going to be in Ireland, let alone whether he was going to announce his resignation.

Amid speculation that the FAI had anticipated Charlton's departure by organising a press conference, Sean Connolly, the association's chief executive, admitted: "Plans are ready to roll for an announcement to be made."

But from his home in Northumbria Charlton said angrily: "I have never said I

would attend a press conference. I have never said I was going to speak with the FAI before the game against Holland and informed them that, as a matter of courtesy, I would drop in at Merion Square (FAI headquarters) and have a chat with them the next time I was in Dublin." Charlton was due in the city today for a non-football related business meeting.

"The FAI were aware, as everybody else ought to be, of my intention to take a holiday in Spain to think things over, before making a decision."

The association's pre-emptive strike will provoke a public backlash if Charlton is seen to be forced out. The FAI has always said the job was his for as long as he wanted it. Although many people in the south of Ireland now believe the time is right for change, Charlton has earned their eternal gratitude for bringing the Republic a decade of unprecedented soccer success.

But constant speculation

has put the FAI under increasing pressure to wrench a decision from Charlton and begin the search for his successor. And it is anxious to have a new manager installed before the World Cup 1998 qualifying matches begin in the summer. The Republic are due to attend a meeting in Liechtenstein on January 23rd to negotiate fixture dates for those matches.

At 60 years of age, even had the Republic qualified for Euro '96, Charlton may have resigned in the summer. The fact that, after a string of the worst results in his time in charge, they lost out in the qualifying play-off to Holland last week, has made him face up to that decision earlier.

Charlton could expect a £250,000 pay-off, and the possibility of a testimonial match against Brazil had been discussed as a golden handshake from the FAI after a decade in which, on limited playing resources, he has taken them to a European Championship and two World Cup finals.

Charlton, elevated to the sainthood by the Irish, has always said he would know when it was time to go. "I will go when the Irish people no longer want me," he has said. For the first time the majority of supporters are saying that time is now. "We are grateful to him for what he has done. But we think he feels it is time for a change, too," said one.

Indeed Charlton admitted as much recently but added: "I don't want to give up the job. I was told once that you should never outstay your welcome. After 10 years some of my older players like Paul McGrath and John Aldridge know me better than I know myself."

Charlton has numerous interests outside football and would retain his connections with Ireland: he has a house there, fishing rights and business interests, including a new multi-million pub venture in the heart of Dublin. He would be in demand in England as a television pun-

dit and it has been suggested there might be an unpaid directorship of Newcastle United on offer.

One club in the newly formed US Major Soccer League — the New England Revolution — are trying to tempt him with the lure of commercial spin-offs. Based in Boston, with its huge Irish population, Charlton would be as popular there as in Ireland but is unlikely to be tempted.

Charlton believes that the Millwall manager and former Republic centre-half Mick McCarthy would be a good replacement for him.

McCarthy last week signed a three-year contract with the First Division's Millwall but it is believed the FAI is willing to accept a part-time manager. Should the job be available on that basis, Howard Kendall, who has recently taken over as manager of Sheffield United, is known to be a front-running candidate. Kenny Dalglish is the bookmakers' favourite. Black-



Charlton... angry saint

burn's director of football was in Dublin recently and talked informally with FAI officials.

The Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear, Dublin-born and a former Republic international, has fallen behind in the betting. And Martin O'Neill, who resigned as Norwich manager last week, appeared to have ruled himself out by lining up the Leicester City job. While O'Neill's Northern Ireland connections and political views on a united Ireland might make him a good choice for a united Ireland side, that is one for the future.

Prancing girls shun the spirit of the sideline



Ian Katz

THE first American football game I attended was between the Washington Redskins and the Arizona Cardinals. I did not see much of it because the view from our field-level seats in Washington's tiny RFK stadium was obscured most of the time by hulking players patrolling the sidelines and the rest of it by a troupe of women wearing more make-up than clothes. The Redskins, my friend explained.

New York Jets games do not pose the same problem. The team's unremitting awfulness means it is easy to get loftier seats — and the Jets have no cheerleaders.

At a recent game half-time entertainment was provided by 100 or so women of wildly varying sizes giving a performance of "synchronised slide aerobics" which elicited only slightly less mirth from the Meadowlands crowd than the average Jets drive.

Since the Jets' almost equally dismal Meadowlands stable-mates, the Giants, do not include dancing girls on their roster either, it is tempting to posit a link between the presence — or absence — of cheerleaders and the fortunes of their teams.

After all the Cleveland Browns, one of the few teams to have inflicted more misery on their fans than the Jets (by leaving town, as well as by playing awfully) are conspicuously cheerleaderless. Ditto the luckless Chicago Bears.

A FULLER list of officially cheerless teams, however, casts doubt on this correlation. The Pittsburgh Steelers appear to be doing perfectly well without the help of short skirts and pom-poms and even the Green Bay Packers, proud of their uncluttered side-lines, are enjoying a successful season.

"Spirit," as it is somewhat mystically known, remains a deadly serious business in America — literally, as one Texas teenager memorably discovered a few years back when it emerged that the mother of a rival cheerleader had hired a hit man to kill her.

More than a million girls take to the sidelines weekly to egg on their male classmates with a fiendishly complex repertoire of gymnastic manoeuvres and stupor-inducing chants. But out in the professional leagues all is not well with the spirit. The teams who have dispensed with their prancing girls are vague about their reasons.

But, caught between the commercial brutality of the NFL and the politically correct sensibilities of Nineties America, the professional cheerleader is becoming an endangered species.

A few months ago the Buffalo Bills, the high-kicking support squad for the Bills, threw the cheerleading world into turmoil when they announced plans to form a union, complaining of poor conditions and lack of respect.

"The girls did not want to be looked at as sex objects any more," explained Greg Huber, vice-president of the Pennsylvania electrical firm which bought Buffalo Bills line from a Mexican restaurant chain amid the rumpus. Huber defused the revolt by persuading the Bills to join the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. But there have been signs of trouble elsewhere, too.

LAST year an embittered former director of cheerleading for the New England Patriots complained that she had been sacked for refusing to make her Patriots don skimpy outfits like those worn by the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders. Not long before the Redskins were rocked by a revolt against draconian regulations, including a ban on wearing knickers.

Even the Dallas Cowboys girls, the AC Milan of NFL cheerleading, have shown signs of once unimaginable militancy. When there were suggestions, a few years back, that the squad might swap its trademark halter tops and hot pants for something skimpier, more than a third of the cheerleaders walked out in protest.

Liaisons between cheerleaders and players, long accepted to be as much a part of spirit as pom-poms and rah-rah skirts, have also become problematic in an environment of heightened sensitivity about sexual harassment. The Minnesota Vikings quarterback Warren Moon had barely explained away abuse allegations made by his wife when he was facing harassment charges from two Vikings girlfriends.

Perhaps synchronised slide aerobics is not such a bad idea.



Early breakdown... England's coach halts on the highway

England toil against boys

Vic Marks watches some odd goings-on in Pietermaritzburg

THIS was an odd day in every way. First England were able to embark on a cricket match in a sodden South Africa, but not before the coach had broken down.

Do not fret: Raymond Illingworth's mental state is fine, though this may be because he took the curious decision to spend the day on the beach. In his absence Wayne Morton, the team physio, decided he knew how to fix the spluttering team bus. But it failed to respond and the start was delayed for 30 minutes.

Then, after an hour's play, the England team experienced the peculiar sensation of lamenting the quality of the opposition as the Combined South African Universities slumped to 23 for five. Mark Ilett despatched the upper order but any fears about the students' standard were dispelled by mid-afternoon. By then Nicky Pothas, a wicketkeeper from Transvaal, had reached a dashing maiden hundred by speaking ill of two disdained boundaries. The students recovered spectacularly to 353 for six. Pothas reaching 141 not out.

During that first hour Ilett exploited the nervousness of the students as well as the dampness in the pitch. Two bouncers and two swingers were enough to mesmerise his victims, while Peter Martin had Gerhardus Liebenberg caught down the leg side.

When Mike Atherton decided to introduce Jason Gal-

lian to the tour his start was less than auspicious: as he reached the wicket to propel his first delivery he slipped and fell in a heap.

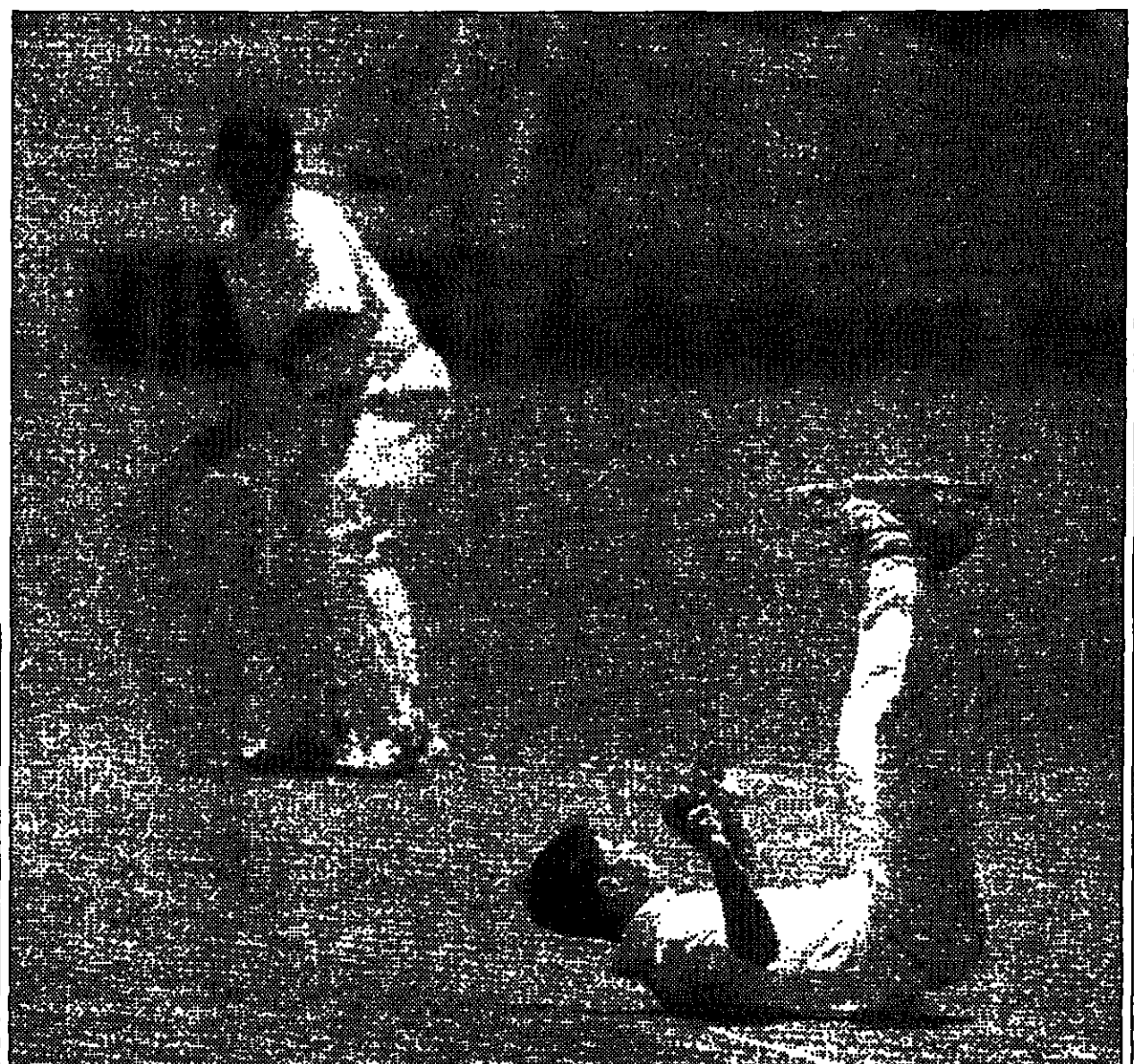
In the afternoon Gallian raised more serious cause for alarm. Having checked a stinging drive from Pothas at extra cover he immediately ran from the field with a dislocated little finger on his left hand. Morton was swiftly in action again and Gallian returned within 20 minutes.

The English spinners did not enjoy their day but initially Pothas was restless against them. He failed at Richard Illingworth with more than a hint of desperation, made good contact and the ball cleared the long-on boundary. Immediately Atherton posted deep fielders at mid-off and mid-on and Pothas picked up comfortable singles. Had he been forced to play more extravagant strokes he would surely have perished and at 40 for five the conservative field setting was naive.

The ball is supposed to turn in Port Elizabeth but Pothas also jeopardised Mike Watkinson's prospects of playing in the Test there. He cut him too frequently for Atherton's comfort although on 86 he gave his one chance, skying to the substitute Devon Malcolm at backward square leg. The best that could be said was that Malcolm prevented another boundary.

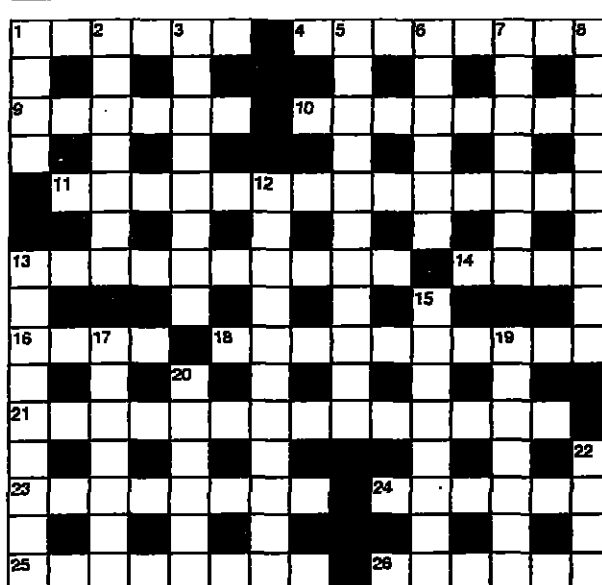
Watkinson had to take the second new ball as Martin was, according to Morton, suffering from a sore right shoulder. But both Martin and Gallian are expected to be available for Test selection.

Scoreboard, page 14



Bowled over... Jason Gallian finishes flat on his back after slipping on his first run-up yesterday

CLIVE MASON



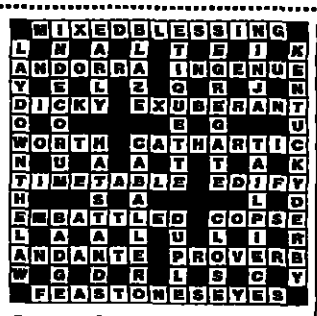
Guardian Crossword No 20,530

Across

- 1 Old car bringing new pal joy (6)
- 4 Promotes loans (8)
- 9 Proclamation-makers seeing credit rise dramatically (6)
- 10 One in favour of state exchange (8)
- 11 Put on her garden-patch by Arthur's father (5,9)
- 13 Post having verbal contention with courier (10)
- 14 Review part of regular Oriental examination (4)
- 16 Literary animal (4)
- 18 He is presumably on his way to work a complete change (5,5)
- 21 Foundry-worker's strong reason for absence? (4-4,6)
- 23 Response of soldier to battle (8)
- 24 Response of sailor to animal (3-3)
- 25 Swift female Lawrence found "like a star" (8)
- 26 Want to go to the other side (6)

Down

- 1 Flag used by a bowler (4)
- 2 Salmon-spear or its reel perhaps (7)
- 3 Wrong-headed cleric turning up in dark blue (8)
- 5 Show how devil's treat transgression (11)
- 6 Soothsayer's tools it is said (6)
- 7 Bell's mistake (7)
- 8 Material fault in undergarment (5,4)
- 12 Unpromising future for inefficient watchman (4,4-3)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,529

- 13 Crazy characters' entree to sports competitions (4,5)
- 15 Contour line reading 101 in Mysore (8)
- 17 Wise man accepting fool's system of treatment (7)
- 19 He is an expert at suet-shredding (7)

Set by Janus

- 20 Am a Shakespearean character (6)
- 22 A sound achievement by supporters (4)

Solution tomorrow

Published by Guardian Newspapers Limited at 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1A 3ER, and at 164 Despatch Road, Chennai 600 024. Printed at the Guardian Press Centre, 2 Millharbour, London E14 9AQ. Trafalgar Park, Putney, London SW15 2NU. Telephone 0171 275 2222. Telex 8811748 (Guard G). Fax 0171 837 2114. 0171 835 8342. Telephone sales 0171-811 5000. Manchester: Tel 0161-832 7200. Fax 0161-832 5351/834 9717. Tel sales 0161-834 8886.

Cellnet and Vodafone think Freephone should be 29p peak rate,

Orange think it should be free.

Another reason why, on average, Orange users save £20 every month.

Available from Dixons, Carphone Warehouse, The Link, Tandy, Currys, Comet, John Lewis Partnership, Granada, Radio Rentals, Tempo, Norweb, Hutchison Telecom Retail and other leading high street and independent stockists nationwide. Call 0800 8010 80 for full details. Comparison based on equivalent tariffs. Excludes calls to calling cards.

مكتبة من الامم